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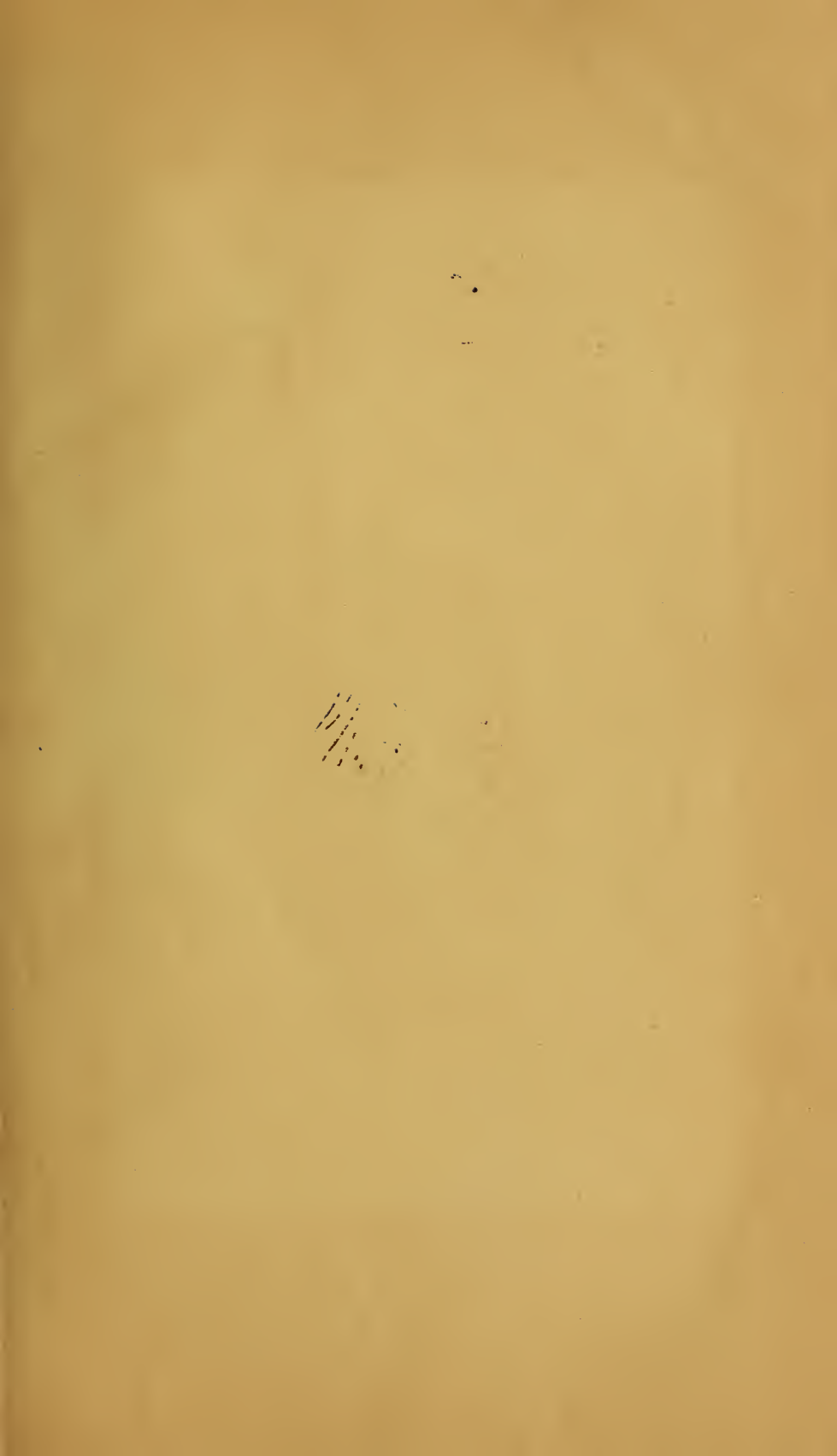


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THOS DUNCAN ARA INVT

A.B. WALTER. SCULPT.

CHRISTOPHER NORTH IN HIS SPORTING JACKET .

THE
RECREATIONS
OF
CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

John Wilson

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

1854

BOSTON:
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON, AND COMPANY.
NEW YORK: JAMES C. DERBY.

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REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE
IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PASSED MAY 10, 1870
RELATIVE TO THE LANDS BELONGING TO THE UNITED STATES
IN THE TERRITORY OF ARIZONA

WASHINGTON: GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1871.

RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS SPORTING JACKET.

FYTTE FIRST.

THERE is a fine and beautiful alliance between all pastimes pursued on flood, field, and fell. The principles in human nature on which they depend, are in all the same; but those principles are subject to infinite modifications and varieties, according to the difference of individual and national character. All such pastimes, whether followed merely as pastimes, or as professions, or as the immediate means of sustaining life, require sense, sagacity, and knowledge of nature and nature's laws; nor less, patience, perseverance, courage even, and bodily strength or activity, while the spirit which animates and supports them is a spirit of anxiety, doubt, fear, hope, joy, exultation, and triumph—in the heart of the young a fierce passion—in the heart of the old a passion still, but subdued and tamed down, without, however, being much dulled or deadened, by various experience of all the mysteries of the calling, and by the gradual subsiding of all impetuous impulses in the frames of all mortal men beyond perhaps threescore, when the blackest head will be becoming gray, the most nervous knee less firmly knit, the most steely-sprung instep less elastic, the keenest eye less of a far-keeper, and, above all, the most boiling heart less like a caldron or a crater—yea, the whole man subject to some dimness or decay, and, consequently, the whole duty of man like the new edition of a book, from which many passages that formed the chief glory of the *editio princeps* have been expunged—the whole character of the style corrected without being thereby improved—just like the later editions of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, which were written by Akenside when he was about twenty-one, and altered by him at forty—to the exclusion or destruction of many most *splendida vitia*, by which process the poem, in our humble opinion, was shorn of its brightest beams, and suffered disastrous twilight and eclipse—perplexing critics.

Now, seeing that such pastimes are in number almost infinite, and infinite the varieties of

human character, pray what is there at all surprising in your being madly fond of shooting—and your brother Tom just as foolish about fishing—and cousin Jack perfectly insane on fox-hunting—while the old gentleman your father, in spite of wind and weather, perennial gout, and annual apoplexy, goes a-coursing of the white-hipped hare on the bleak Yorkshire wolds—and uncle Ben, as if just escaped from Bedlam or St. Luke's, with Dr. Haslam at his heels, or with a few hundred yards' start of Dr. Warburton, is seen galloping, in a Welsh wig and strange apparel, in the rear of a pack of Lilliputian beagles, all barking as if they were as mad as their master, supposed to be in chase of an invisible animal that keeps eternally doubling in field and forest—"still hoped for, never seen," and well christened by the name of Escape?

Phrenology sets the question for ever at rest. All people have thirty-three faculties. Now there are but twenty-four letters in the alphabet; yet how many languages—some six-thousand we believe, each of which is susceptible of many dialects! No wonder, then, that you might as well try to count all the sands on the sea-shore as all the species of sportsmen.

There is, therefore, nothing to prevent any man with a large and sound development from excelling, at once, in rat-catching and deer-stalking—from being, in short, a universal genius in sports and pastimes. Heaven has made us such a man.

Yet there seems to be a natural course or progress in pastimes. We do not now speak of marbles—or knuckling down at taw—or trundling a hoop—or pall-lall—or pitch and toss—or any other of the games of the school playground. We restrict ourselves to what, somewhat inaccurately perhaps, are called field-sports. Thus angling seems the earliest of them all in the order of nature. There the new-breeched urchin stands on the low bridge of the little bit burnie! and with crooked pin, baited with one unwrithing ring of a dead worm, and attached to a yarn-thread—for he has not yet got into hair, and is years off gut—his rod of the mere willow or hazel wand, there will

he stand during all his play-hours, as forgetful of his primer as if the weary art of printing had never been invented, day after day, week after week, month after month, in mute, deep, earnest, passionate, heart-mind-and-soul-engrossing hope of some time or other catching a minnow or a beardie! A tug—a tug! With face ten times flushed and pale by turns ere you could count ten, he at last has strength, in the agitation of his fear and joy, to pull away at the monster—and there he lies in his beauty among the gowans and the greensward, for he has whapped him right over his head and far away, a fish a quarter of an ounce in weight, and, at the very least, two inches long! Off he flies, on wings of wind, to his father, mother, and sisters and brothers, and cousins, and all the neighbourhood, holding the fish aloft in both hands, still fearful of its escape, and, like a genuine child of corruption, his eyes brighten at the first blush of cold blood on his small fummy fingers. He carries about with him, up-stairs and down-stairs, his prey upon a plate; he will not wash his hands before dinner, for he exults in the silver scales adhering to the thumb-nail that scooped the pin out of the baggy's maw—and at night, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined," he is overheard murmuring in his sleep—a thief, a robber, and a murderer, in his yet infant dreams!

From that hour Angling is no more a mere delightful day-dream, haunted by the dim hopes of imaginary minnows, but a reality—an art—a science—of which the flaxen-headed school-boy feels himself to be master—a mystery in which he has been initiated; and off he goes now all alone, in the power of successful passion to the distant brook—brook a mile off—with fields, and hedges, and single trees, and little groves, and a huge forest of six acres, between it and the house in which he is boarded or was born! There flows on the slender music of the shadowy shallows—there pours the deeper din of the birch-tree'd waterfall. The scared water-pyet flits away from stone to stone, and dipping, disappears among the airy bubbles, to him a new sight of joy and wonder. And oh! how sweet the scent of the broom or furze, yellowing along the braes, where leap the lambs, less happy than he, on the knolls of sunshine! His grandfather has given him a half-crown rod in two pieces—yes, his line is of hair twisted—plaited by his own soon-instructed little fingers. By Heavens, he is fishing with the fly! And the Fates, who, grim and grisly as they are painted to be by full-grown, ungrateful, lying poets, smile like angels upon the paidier in the brook, winnowing the air with their wings into western breezes, while at the very first throw the yellow trout forsakes his fastness beneath the bog-wood, and with a lazy wallop, and then a sudden plunge, and then a race like lightning, changes at once the child into the boy, and shoots through his thrilling and aching heart the ecstasy of a new life expanding in that glorious pastime, even as a rainbow on a sudden brightens up the sky. *Fortuna favet fortibus*—and with one long pull, and strong pull, and pull altogether, Johnny lands a twelve-incher on the soft, smooth, silvery sand of the only bay in all the burn where such an exploit

was possible, and dashing upon him like an osprey, soars up with him in his talons to the bank, breaking his line as he hurries off to a spot of safety twenty yards from the pool, and then flinging him down on a heath-surrounded plat of sheep-nibbled verdure, lets him bounce about till he is tired, and lies gasping with unfrequent and feeble motions, bright and beautiful, and glorious with all his yellow light and crimson lustre, spotted, speckled, and starred in his scaly splendour, beneath a sun that never shone before so dazzlingly: but now the radiance of the captive creature is dimmer and obscured, for the eye of day winks and seems almost shut behind that slow-sailing mass of clouds, composed in equal parts of air, rain, and sunshine.

Springs, summers, autumns, winters—each within itself longer, by many times longer than the whole year of grown-up life, that slips at last through one's fingers like a knotless thread—pass over the curled darling's brow; and look at him now, a straight and strongly strippling, in the savage spirit of sport, springing over rock-ledge after rock-ledge, nor heeding aught as he plashes knee-deep, or waistband-high, through river-feeding torrents, to the glorious music of his running and ringing reel, after a tongue-hooked salmon, insanely seeking with the ebb of tide, but all in vain, the white breakers of the sea. No hazel or willow wand, no half-crown rod of ash framed by village wright, is now in his practised hands, of which the very left is dexterous; but a twenty-foot rod of Phin's, all ring-rustling, and a-glitter with the preserving varnish, limber as the attenuating line itself, and lithe to its topmost tenuity as the elephant's proboscis—the hickory and the horn without twist, knot, or flaw—from butt to fly a faultless taper, "fine by degrees and beautifully less," the beau-ideal of a rod by the skill of cunning craftsman to the senses materialized! A fish—fat, fair, and forty! "She is a salmon, therefore to be woo'd—she is a salmon, therefore to be won"—but shy, timid, capricious, headstrong, now wrathful and now full of fear, like any other female whom the cruel artist has hooked by lip or heart, and, in spite of all her struggling, will bring to the gasp at last; and then with calm eyes behold her lying in the shade dead or worse than dead, fast-fading, and to be re-illuminated no more the lustre of her beauty, insensible to sun or shower, even the most perishable of all perishable things in a world of perishing!—But the salmon has grown sulky, and must be made to spring to the plunging-stone. There, suddenly, instinct with new passion, she shoots out of the foam like a bar of silver bullion; and, relapsing into the flood, is in another moment at the very head of the water fall! Give her the butt—give her the butt—or she is gone for ever with the thunder into ten fathom deep!—Now comes the trial of your tackle—and when was Phin ever known to fail at the edge of cliff or cataract! Her snout is southwards—right up the middle of the main current of the hill-born river, as if she would seek its very course where she was spawned! She still swims swift, and strong, and deep—and the line goes steady, boys, steady—stiff and steady as a Tory

in the roar of Opposition. There is yet an hour's play in her dorsal fin—danger in the flap of her tail—and yet may her silver shoulder shatter the gut against a rock. Why the river was yesterday in spate, and she is fresh run from the sea. All the lesser waterfalls are now level with the flood, and she meets with no impediment or obstruction—the course is clear—no tree-roots here—no floating branches—for during the night they have all been swept down to the salt loch. *In medio tutissimas ibis*—ay, now you feel she begins to fail—the butt tells now every time you deliver your right. What! another mad leap! yet another sullen plunge! She seems absolutely to have discovered, or rather to be an impersonation of, the Perpetual Motion. Stand back out of the way, you son of a sea-cook!—you in the tattered blue breeches, with the tail of your shirt hanging out. Who the devil sent you all here, ye vagabonds!—Ha! Watty Ritchie, my man, is that you? God bless your honest laughing phiz! What Watty, would you think of a Fish like that about Peebles? Tam Grieve never gruppit sae heavy a ane since first he belanged to the Council.—Curse that colley! Ay! well done, Watty! Stone him to Stobbo. Confound these stirks—if that white one, with caving horns, kicking heels, and straight-up tail, come bellowing by between us and the river, then, “Madam! all is lost, except honour!” If we lose this Fish at six o'clock, then suicide at seven. Our will is made—ten thousand to the Foundling—ditto to the Thames Tunnel—ha—ha—my Beauty! Methinks we could fain and fond kiss thy silver side, languidly lying afloat on the foam as if all further resistance now were vain, and gracefully thou wert surrendering thyself to death! No faith in female—she trusts to the last trial of her tail—sweetly workest thou, O Reel of Reels! and on thy smooth axle spinning sleep'st, even, as Milton describes her, like our own worthy planet. Scrope—Bainbridge—Maule—princes among Anglers—oh! that you were here! Where the devil is Sir Humphry? At his retort? By mysterious sympathy—far off at his own Trows, the Kerres feels that we are killing the noblest fish whose back ever rippled the surface of deep or shallow in the Tweed. Tom Purdy stands like a seer, entranced in glorious vision, beside turreted Abbotsford. Shade of Sandy Govan! Alas! alas! Poor Sandy—why on thy pale face that melancholy smile!—Peter! The Gaff! The Gaff! Into the eddy she sails, sick and slow, and almost with a swirl—whitening as she nears the sand—there she has it—struck right into the shoulder, fairer than that of Juno, Diana, Minerva, or Venus—and lies at last in all her glorious length and breadth of beaming beauty, fit prey for giant or demigod angling before the Flood!

“The child is father of the man,
And I would wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety!”

So much for the Angler. The Shooter, again, he begins with his pipe-gun, formed of the last year's growth of a branch of the plane-tree—the beautiful dark-green-leaved and fragrant-flowered plane-tree—that stands straight

in stem and round in head, visible and audible too from afar the bee-resounding umbrage, alike on stormy sea-coast and in sheltered inland vale, still loving the roof of the fisherman's or peasant's cottage.

Then comes, perhaps, the city pop-gun, in shape like a very musket, such as soldiers bear—a Christmas present from parent, once a colonel of volunteers—nor feeble to discharge the pea-bullet or barley-shot, formidable to face and eyes; nor yet unfelt, at six paces, by hinder-end of playmate, scornfully yet fearfully exposed. But the shooter soon tires of such ineffectual trigger—and his soul, as well as his hair, is set on fire by that extraordinary compound—Gunpowder. He begins with burning off his eyebrows on the King's birthday; squibs and crackers follow, and all the pleasures of the pluff. But he soon longs to let off a gun—“and follow to the field some warlike lord”—in hopes of being allowed to discharge one of the double-barrels, after Ponto has made his last point, and the half-hidden chimneys of home are again seen smoking among the trees. This is his first practice in fire arms, and from that hour he is—a Shooter.

Then there is in most rural parishes—and of rural parishes alone do we condescend to speak—a pistol, a horse one, with a bit of silver on the butt—perhaps one that originally served in the Scots Greys. It is bought, or borrowed, by the young shooter, who begins firing first at barn-doors, then at trees, and then at living things—a strange cur, who, from his lolling tongue may be supposed to have the hydrophobia—a cat that has purred herself asleep on the sunny churchyard wall, or is watching mice at their hole-mouths among the graves—a water-rat in the mill-lead—or weasel that, running to his retreat in the wall, always turns round to look at you—a goose wandered from his common in disappointed love—or brown duck, easily mistaken by the unscrupulous for a wild one, in pond remote from human dwelling, or on meadow by the river side, away from the clack of the muter-mill. The corby-crow, too, shouted out of his nest on some tree lower than usual, is a good flying mark to the more advanced class: or morning magpie, a-chatter at skreigh of day close to the cottage door among the chickens; or a flock of pigeons, wheeling overhead on the stubble field, or sitting so thick together, that every stock is blue with tempting plumage.

But the pistol is discharged for a fowling piece—brown and rusty, with a slight crack probably in the muzzle, and a lock out of all proportion to the barrel. Then the young shooter aspires at halfpennies thrown up into the air—and generally hit, for there is never wanting an apparent dent in copper metal; and thence he mounts to the glancing and skimming swallow, a household bird, and therefore to be held sacred, but shot at on the excuse of its being next to impossible to hit him—an opinion strengthened into belief by several summers' practice. But the small brown and white marten wheeling through below the bridge, or along the many-holed red sand-bank, is admitted by all boys to be fair game—and still more, the longed-winged legless black

devil, that, if it falls to the ground, cannot rise again, and therefore screams wheeling round the corners and battlements of towers and castles, or far out even of cannon shot, gambles in companies of hundreds, and regiments of a thousand, aloft in the evening ether, within the orbit of the eagle's flight. It seems to boyish eyes, that the creatures near the earth, when but little blue sky is seen between the specks and the wallflowers growing on the coign of vantage—the signal is given to fire; but the devilets are too high in heaven to smell the sulphur. The starling whips with a shrill cry into his nest, and nothing falls to the ground but a tiny bit of mossy mortar inhabited by a spider!

But the Day of Days arrives at last, when the school-boy, or rather the college boy, returning to his rural vacation, (for in Scotland college winters tread close, too close, on the heels of academies,) has a gun—a gun in a case—a double-barrel too—of his own—and is provided with a license, probably without any other qualification than that of hit or miss. On some portentous morning he effulges with the sun in velvet jacket and breeches of the same—many-buttoned gaiters, and an unkerchiefed throat. 'Tis the fourteenth of September, and lo! a pointer at his heels—Ponto, of course—a game-bag like a beggar's wallet at his side—destined to be at eve as full of charity—and all the paraphernalia of an accomplished sportsman. Proud, were she to see the sight, would be the "mother that bore him;" the heart of that old sportsman, his daddy, would spring for joy! The chained mastiff in the yard yowls his admiration; the servant lasses uplift the pane of their garret, and, with suddenly withdrawn blushes, titter their delight in their rich paper curls and pure night-clothes. Rab Roger, who has been cleaning out the barn, comes forth to partake of the caulk; and away go the footsteps of the old poacher and his pupil through the autumnal rime, off to the uplands, where—for it is one of the earliest of harvests—there is scarcely a single acre of standing corn. The turnip fields are bright green with hope and expectation—and coveys are couching on lazy beds beneath the potato-shaw. Every high hedge, ditch-guarded on either side, shelters its own brood—imagination hears the whir shaking the dew-drops from the broom on the brae—and first one bird, and then another, and then the remaining number, in itself no contemptible covey, seems to fancy's ear to spring single, or in the clouds, from the coppice brushwood with here and there an intercepting standard tree.

Poor Ponto is much to be pitied. Either having a cold in his nose, or having ante-breakfasted by stealth on a red herring, he can scent nothing short of a badger, and, every other field, he starts in horror, shame, and amazement, to hear himself, without having attended to his points, enclosed in a whirring covey. He is still duly taken between those inexorable knees; out comes the speck-and-span new dog-whip, heavy enough for a horse; and the yowl of the patient is heard over the whole parish. Mothers press their yet unchastised infants to their breasts; and the schoolmaster,

fastening a knowing eye on dunce and ne'er-do-weel, holds up, in silent warning, the terror of the taws. Frequent flogging will cower the spirit of the best man and dog in Britain. Ponto travels now in fear and trembling but a few yards from his tyrant's feet, till, rousing himself to the sudden scent of something smelling strongly, he draws slowly and beautifully, and

"There fix'd, a perfect semicircle stands."

Up runs the Tyro ready-cocked, and, in his eagerness, stumbling among the stubble, when, hark and lo! the gabble of grey goslings, and the bill-protruded hiss of goose and gander! Bang goes the right-hand barrel at Ponto, who now thinks it high time to be off to the tune of "ower the hills and far awa'," while the young gentleman, half-ashamed and half-incensed, half-glad and half-sorry, discharges the left-hand barrel, with a highly improper curse, at the father of the feathered family before him, who receives the shot like a ball in his breast, throws a somerset quite surprising for a bird of his usual habits, and after biting the dust with his bill, and thumping it with his bottom, breathes an eternal farewell to this sublimary scene—and leaves himself to be paid for at the rate of eighteenpence a pound to his justly irritated owner, on whose farm he had led a long and not only harmless, but honourable and useful life.

It is nearly as impossible a thing as we know, to borrow a dog about the time the sun has reached his meridian, on the First Day of the Partridges. Ponto by this time has sneaked, unseen by human eye, into his kennel, and coiled himself up into the arms of "tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." A farmer makes offer of a colley, who, from numbering among his paternal ancestors a Spanish pointer, is quite a Don in his way among the cheepers, and has been known in a turnip field to stand in an attitude very similar to that of setting. Luath has no objection to a frolic over the fields, and plays the part of Ponto to perfection. At last he catches sight of a covey basking, and, leaping in upon them open-mouthed, despatches them right and left, even like the famous dog Billy killing rats in the pit at Westminster. The birds are bagged with a gentle remonstrance, and Luath's exploit rewarded with a whang of cheese. Elated by the pressure on his shoulder, the young gentleman laughs at the idea of pointing; and fires away, like winking, at every uprise of birds, near or remote; works a miracle by bringing down three at a time, that chanced, unknown to him, to be crossing, and wearied with such slaughter, lends his gun to the attendant farmer, who can mark down to an inch, and walks up to the dropped pout as if he could kick her up with his foot; and thus the bag in a few hours is half full of feathers; while, to close with eclat the sport of the day, the cunning elder takes him to a bramble bush, in a wall nook, at the edge of the wood, and returning the gun into his hands, shows him poor pussy sitting with open eyes, fast asleep! The pellets are in her brain, and turning herself over, she crinkles out to her full length, like a piece of untwisting Indian rubber, and is dead. The posterior

ponch of the jacket, yet unstained by blood, paws to receive her—and in she goes plump; paws, ears, body, feet, fud, and all—while Luath, all the way home to the Mains, keeps snoking at the red drops oozing through; for well he knows, in summer's heat and winter's cold, the smell of pussy, whether sitting beneath a tuft of withered grass on the brae, or burrowed beneath a snow wreath. A hare, we certainly must say, in spite of haughtier sportsman's scorn, is, when sitting, a most satisfactory shot.

But let us trace no further thus, step by step, the Pilgrim's Progress. Look at him now—a finished sportsman—on the moors—the bright black boundless Dalwhinnie moors, stretching away, by long Loch Erricht side, into the dim and distant day that hangs, with all its clouds, over the bosom of far Loch Rannoch. Is that the pluffer at partridge-pouts who had nearly been the death of poor Ponto? Lord Kennedy himself might take a lesson now from the straight and steady style in which on the mountain brow, and up to the middle in heather, he brings his Manton to the deadly level! More unerring eye never glanced along brown barrel! Finer forefinger never touched a trigger! Follow him a whole day, and not one wounded bird. All most beautifully arrested on their flight by instantaneous death! Down dropped right and left, like lead on the heather—old cock and hen, singled out among the orphaned brood, as calmly as a cook would do it in the larder from among a pile of plumage. No random shot within—no needless shot out of distance—covered every feather before stir of finger—and body, back, and brain, pierced, broken, shattered! And what perfect pointers! There they stand, as still as death—yet instinct with life—the whole half dozen! Mungo, the black-tanned—Don, the red-spotted—Clara, the snow-white—Primrose, the pale yellow—Basto, the bright brown, and Nimrod, in his coat of many colours, often seen afar through the mists like a meteor.

So much for the Angler's and the Shooter's Progress—now briefly for the Hunter's. Hunting, in this country, unquestionably commences with cats. Few cottages without a cat. If you do not find her on the mouse watch at the gable end of the house just at the corner, take a solar observation, and by it look for her on bank or brae—somewhere about the premises—if unsuccessful, peep into the byre, and up through a hole among the dusty divots of the roof, and chance is you see her eyes glittering far-ben in the gloom; but if she be not there either, into the barn and up on the mow, and surely she is on the straw or on the baulks below the kipples. No. Well, then, let your eye travel along the edge of that little wood behind the cottage—ay, yonder she is!—but she sees both you and your two terriers—one rough and the other smooth—and, slinking away through a gap in the old hawthorn hedge in among the hazels, she either lies *perdu*, or is up a fir-tree almost as high as the magpie's or corby's nest.

Now—observe—shooting cats is one thing—and hunting them is another—and shooting and hunting, though they may be united, are here treated separately; so, in the present case, the cat makes her escape. But get her watch-

ing birds—young larks, perhaps, walking on the lea—or young linnets hanging on the broom—down by yonder in the holm lands, where there are no trees, except indeed that one glorious single tree, the Golden Oak, and he is guarded by Glowrer, and then what a most capital chase! Stretching herself up with crooked back, as if taking a yawn—off she jumps, with tremendous spangs, and tail, thickened with fear and anger, perpendicular. Youf—youf—youf—go the terriers—head over heels perhaps in their fury—and are not long in turning her—and bringing her to bay at the hedge-root, all ablaze and abristle. A she-devil incarnate!—Hark—all at once now strikes up a trio—Catalani caterwauling the treble—Glowrer taking the bass—and Tearer the tenor—a cruel concert cut short by a squalling throtter. Away—away along the holm—and over the knowe—and into the wood—for lo! the gudewife, brandishing a besom, comes flying demented without her mutch down to the murder of her tabby—her son, a stout stripling, is seen skirting the potato-field to intercept our flight—and, most formidable of all foes, the Man of the House himself, in his shirt-sleeves and flail in his hand, bolts from the barn, down the croft, across the burn, and up the brae, to cut us off from the Manse. The hunt's up—and 'tis a capital steeple chase. Disperse—disperse! Down the hill, Jack—up the hill, Gill—dive the dell, Kit—thread the wood, Pat—a hundred yards' start is a great matter—a stern chase is always a long chase—schoolboys are generally in prime wind—the old man begins to puff and blow, and snort, and put his paws to his paunch—the son is thrown out by a double of dainty Davy's—and the "sair be-grutten mither" is gathering up the torn and tattered remains of Tortoise-shell Tabby, and invoking the vengeance of heaven and earth on her pitiless murderers. Some slight relief to her bursting and breaking heart to vow, that she will make the minister hear of it on the deafest side of his head—ay, even if she have to break in upon him sitting on Saturday night, getting aff by rote his fushionless sermon, in his ain study.

Now, gentle reader, again observe, that though we have now described, *con amore*, a most cruel case of cat-killing, in which we certainly did play a most aggravated part, some Sixty Years since, far indeed are we from recommending such wanton barbarity to the rising generation. We are not inditing a homily on humanity to animals, nor have we been appointed to succeed the Rev. Dr. Somerville of Currie, the great Patentee of the Safety Double Bloody Barrel, to preach the annual Gibsonian sermon on that subject—we are simply stating certain matters of fact, illustrative of the rise and progress of the love of pastime in the soul, and leave our readers to draw the moral. But may we be permitted to say, that the naughtiest schoolboys often make the most pious men; that it does not follow according to the wise saws and modern instances of prophetic old women of both sexes, that he who in boyhood has worried a cat with terriers, will, in manhood, commit murder on one of his own species; or that peccadilloes

are the progenitors of capital crimes. Nature allows to growing lads a certain range of wickedness, *sans peur et sans reproche*. She seems, indeed, to whistle into their ear, to mock ancient females—to laugh at Quakers—to make mouths at a descent man and his wife riding double to church—the matron's thick legs ludicrously bobbing from the pillion, kept firm on Dobbin's rump by her bottom, "*ponderibus librata suis*,"—to tip the wink to young women during sermon on Sunday—and on Saturday, most impertinently to kiss them, whether they will or no, on high-road or by-path—and to perpetrate many other little nameless enormities.

No doubt, at the time, such things will wear rather a suspicious character; and the boy who is detected in the fact, must be punished by pawmy, or privation, or imprisonment from play. But when punished, he is of course left free to resume his atrocious career; nor is it found that he sleeps a whit the less soundly, or shrieks for Heaven's mercy in his dreams. Conscience is not a craven. Groans belong to guilt. But fun and frolic, even when trespasses, are not guilt; and though a cat have nine lives, she has but one Ghost—and that will haunt no house where there are terriers. What! surely if you have the happiness of being a parent you would not wish your only boy—your son and heir—the blended image of his mother's loveliness and his father's manly beauty—to be a smug, smooth, prim, and proper prig, with his hair always combed down on his forehead, hands always unglaured, and without spot or blemish on his white-thread stockings? You would not wish him, surely, to be always moping and musing in a corner with a good book held close to his nose—bottanizing with his maiden aunts—doing the pretty at tea-tables with tabbies, in handing round the short-bread, taking cups, and attending to the kettle—telling tales on all naughty boys and girls—laying up his penny a-week pocket-money in a penny pig—keeping all his clothes neatly folded up in an untumbled drawer—having his own peg for his uncrushed hat—saying his prayers precisely as the clock strikes nine, while his companions are yet at blind-man's buff—and puffed up every Sabbath-eve by the parson's praises of his uncommon memory for a sermon—while all the other boys are scolded for having fallen asleep before Tenthly? You would not wish him, surely, to write sermons himself at his tender years, nay—even to be able to give you chapter and verse for every quotation from the Bible? No. Better far that he should begin early to break your heart, by taking no care even of his Sunday clothes—blotting his copy—impiously pinning pieces of paper to the Dominic's tail, who to him was a second father—going to the fishing not only without leave but against orders—bathing in the forbidden pool, where the tailor was drowned—drying powder before the school-room fire, and blowing himself and two crack-sculled cronies to the ceiling—tying kettles to the tails of dogs—shooting an old woman's laying hen—galloping bare-backed shelties down stony steeps—climbing trees to the slenderest twig on which bird could build, and up the tooth-of-time-intended sides of old

castles after wall-flowers and starlings—being run away with in carts by colts against turn-pike gates—buying bad ballads from young gipsy-girls, who, on receiving a sixpence, give ever so many kisses in return, saying, "Take your change out of that;"—on a borrowed broken-knee'd pony, with a switch-tail—a devil for galloping—not only attending country-races for a saddle and collar, but entering for and winning the prize—dancing like a devil in barns at kirns—seeing his blooming partner home over the blooming heather, most perilous adventure of all in which virgin-puberty can be involved—fighting with a rival in corduroy breeches, and poll shorn beneath a caup, till his eyes just twinkle through the swollen blue—and, to conclude "this strange eventful history," once brought home at one o'clock in the morning, God knows whence or by whom, and found by the shrieking servant, sent out to listen for him in the moonlight, dead-drunk on the gravel at the gate!

Nay, start not, parental reader—nor, in the terror of anticipation, send, without loss of a single day, for your son at a distant academy, mayhap pursuing even such another career. Trust thou to the genial, gracious, and benign *vis medicatrix naturæ*. What though a few clouds bedim and deform "the innocent brightness of the new-born day?" Lo! how splendid the meridian ether! What though the frost seem to blight the beauty of the budding and blowing rose? Look how she revives beneath dew, rain, and sunshine, till your eyes can even scarce endure the lustre! What though the waters of the sullen fen seem to pollute the snow of the swan? They fall off from her expanded wings, and, pure as a spirit, she soars away, and descends into her own silver lake, stainless as the water-lilies floating round her breast. And shall the immortal soul suffer lasting contamination from the transient chances of its nascent state—in this, less favoured than material and immaterial things that perish? No—it is undergoing endless transmigrations,—every hour a being different, yet the same—dark stains blotted out—rueful inscriptions effaced—many an erasure of impressions once thought permanent, but soon altogether forgotten—and vindicating, in the midst of the earthly corruption in which it is immersed, its own celestial origin, character, and end, often flickering, or seemingly blown out, like a taper in the wind, but all at once self-reilluminated, and shining in inextinguishable and self-fed radiance—like a star in heaven.

Therefore, bad as boys too often are—and a disgrace to the mother who bore them—the cradle in which they were rocked—the nurse by whom they were suckled—the schoolmaster by whom they were flogged—and the hangman by whom it was prophesied they were to be executed—wait patiently for a few years, and you will see them all transfigured—one into a preacher of such winning eloquence, that he almost persuades all men to be Christians—another into a parliamentary orator, who commands the applause of listening senators, and

"Reads his history in a nation's eyes,"

—one into a painter, before whose thunderous heavens the storms of Poussin “pale their ineffectual fires”—another into a poet composing and playing, side by side, on his own peculiar harp, in a concert of vocal and instrumental music, with Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth—one into a great soldier, who, when Wellington is no more, shall, for the freedom of the world, conquer a future Waterloo—another who hoisted his flag on the “mast of some tall ammiral,” shall, like Eliab Harvey in the *Temeraire*, lay two three-deckers on board at once, and clothe some now nameless peak or promontory in immortal glory, like that shining on Trafalgar.

Well, then, after cat-killing comes Coursing. Cats have a look of hares—kittens of leverets—and they are all called Pussy. The terriers are useful still, preceding the line like skirmishers, and with finest noses startling the mawkin from bracken-bush or rush bower, her skylight garret in the old quarry, or her brown study in the brake. Away with your coursing on Marlborough downs, where huge hares are seen squatted from a distance, and the sleek dogs, disrobed of their gaudy trappings, are let slip by a Tryer, running for cups and collars before lords and ladies, and squires of high and low degree—a pretty pastime enough, no doubt, in its way, and a splendid cavalcade. But will it for a moment compare with the sudden and all-unlooked-for start of the “auld witch” from the bunweed-covered lea, when the throat of every pedestrian is privileged to cry “halloo—halloo—halloo”—and whipcord-tailed greyhound and hairy lurcher, without any invidious distinction of birth or bearing, lay their deep breasts to the sward at the same moment, to the same instinct, and brattle over the brae after the disappearing Ears, laid flat at the first sight of her pursuers, as with retroverted eyes she turns her face to the mountain, and seeks the cairn only a little lower than the falcon’s nest.

What signifies any sport in the open air, except in congenial scenery of earth and heaven? Go, thou gentle Cockney! and angle in the New River;—but, bold Englishman, come with us and try a salmon-cast in the old Tay. Go, thou gentle Cockney! and course a suburban hare in the purlieus of Blackheath;—but, bold Englishman, come with us and course an animal that never heard a city-bell, by day a hare, by night an old woman, that loves the dogs she dreads, and hunt her as you will with a leash and a half of lightfoots, still returns at dark to the same form in the turf-dike of the garden of the mountain cottage. The children, who love her as their own eyes—for she has been as a pet about the family, summer and winter, since that chubby-cheeked urchin, of some five years old, first began to swing in his self-rocking cradle—will scarcely care to see her started—nay, one or two of the wickedest among them will join in the halloo; for often, ere this, “has she cheated the very jowlers, and lauched ower her shouter at the lang dows walloping ahint her, sair forfaquhen, up the benty brae—and it’s no the day that she’s gaun to be killed by Rough Robin, or smooth Spring, or the red Bick, or the hairy

Lurcher—though a’ fowr be let lowse on her at ance, and ye surround her or she rise.” What are your great, big, fat, lazy English hares, ten or twelve pounds and upwards, who have the food brought to their very mouth in preserves, and are out of breath with five minutes’ scamper among themselves—to the middle-sized, hard-hipped, wiry-backed, steel-legged, long-winded mawkins of Scotland, that scorn to taste a leaf of a single cabbage in the wee moorland yardie that shelters them, but prey in distant fields, take a breathing every gloaming along the mountain-breast, untired as young eagles ringing the sky for pastime, and before the dogs seem not so much scouring for life as for pleasure, with such an air of freedom, liberty, and independence, do they fling up the moss and cock their fuds in the faces of their pursuers. Yet stanch are they to the spine—strong in bone, and sound in bottom—see, see how Tickler clears that twenty-foot moss-hag at a single spang like a bird—tops that hedge that would turn any hunter that ever stabled in Melton Mowbray—and then, at full speed northward, moves as upon a pivot within his own length, and close upon his haunches, without losing a foot, off within a point of due south. A kennel! He never was and never will be in a kennel all his free joyful days. He has walked and run—and leaped and swam about—at his own will, ever since he was nine days old—and he would have done so sooner had he had any eyes. None of your stinking cracklets for him—he takes his meals with the family, sitting at the right hand of the master’s eldest son. He sleeps in any bed of the house he chooses; and, though no Methodist, he goes every third Sunday to church. That is the education of a Scottish greyhound—and the consequence is, that you may pardonably mistake him for a deer dog from Badenoch or Lochaber, and no doubt in the world that he would rejoice in a glimpse of the antlers on the weather gleam,

“Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trode.
To his hills that encircle the sea.”

This may be called roughing it—slovenly—coarse—rude—artless—unscientific. But we say no—it is your only coursing. Gods! with what a bounding bosom the schoolboy salutes the dawning of the cool—clear—crisp, yes, crisp October morn, (for there has been a slight frost, and the almost leafless hedgerows are all glittering with rime;) and, little time lost at dress or breakfast, crams the luncheon into his pouch, and away to the Trysting-hill Farmhouse, which he fears the gamekeeper and his grews will have left ere he can run across the two long Scotch miles of moor between him and his joy! With steps elastic, he feels flying along the sward as from a spring-board; like a roe, he clears the burns and bursts his way through the brakes; panting, not from breathlessness but anxiety, he lightly leaps the garden fence without a pole, and lo, the green jacket of one huntsman, the red jacket of another, on the plat before the door, and two or three tall rawboned poachers—and there is mirth and music, fun and frolic, and the very soul of enterprise, adventure, and

desperation, in that word—while tall and graceful stand the black, the brindled, and the yellow breed, with keen yet quiet eyes, prophetic of their destined prey, and though motionless now as stone statues of hounds at the feet of Meleager, soon to launch like lightning at the loved halloo!

Out comes the gudewife with her own bottle from the press in the spence, with as big a belly and broad a bottom as her own, and they are no trifle—for the worthy woman has been making much beef for many years, is moreover in the family way, and surely this time there will be twins at least—and pours out a canty caulker for each crowing crony, beginning with the gentle, and ending with the semple, that is our and herself; and better speerit never steamed in sma' still. She offers another with "hinny," by way of Athole brose; but it is put off till evening, for coursing requires a clear head, and the same sobriety then adorned our youth that now dignifies our old age. The gudeman, although an elder of the kirk, and with as grave an aspect as suits that solemn office, needs not much persuasion to let the flail rest for one day, anxious though he be to show the first aits in the market; and donning his broad blue bonnet, and the shortest-tailed auld coat he can find, and taking his kent in his hand, he gruffly gives Wully his orders for a' things about the place, and sets off with the yonkers for a holyday. Not a man on earth who has not his own pastime, depend on't, austere as he may look; and 'twould be well for this wicked world if no elder in it had a "sin that maist easily beset him," worse than what Gibby Watson's wife used to call his "awfu' fondness for the Grews!"

And who that loves to walk or wander over the green earth, except indeed it merely be some sonneteer or ballad-monger, if he had time and could afford it, and lived in a tolerably open country, would not keep, at the very least, three greyhounds? No better eating than a hare, though old blockhead Burton—and he was a blockhead, if blockhead ever there was one in this world—in his Anatomy, chooses to call it melancholy meat. Did he ever, by way of giving dinner a fair commencement, swallow a tureen of hare-soup with half a peck of mealy potatoes? If ever he did—and notwithstanding called hare melancholy meat, there can be no occasion whatever for now wishing him any further punishment. If he never did—then he was on earth the most unfortunate of men. England—as you love us and yourself—cultivate hare-soup, without for a moment dreaming of giving up roasted hare well stuffed with stuffing, jelly sauce being handed round on a large trencher. But there is no such thing as melancholy meat—neither fish, flesh, nor fowl—provided only there be enough of it. Otherwise, the daintiest dish drives you to despair. But independently of spit, pot, and pan, what delight in even daunting about the home farm seeking for a hare? It is quite an art or science. You must consult not only the wind and weather of to-day, but of the night before—and of every day and night back to last Sunday, when probably you were prevented by the rain from going to

church. Then hares shift the sites of their country seats every season. This month they love the fallow field—that, the stubble; this, you will see them, almost without looking for them, big and brown on the bare stony upland lea—that, you must have a hawk's eye in your head to discern, discover, detect them, like birds in their nests, embowered below the bunweed or the bracken; they choose to spend this week in a wood impervious to wet or wind—that, in a marsh too plashy for the plover; now you may depend on finding madam at home in the sulks within the very heart of a bramble-bush or dwarf black-thorn thicket, while the squire cocks his fud at you from the top of a knowe open to blasts from all the airts;—in short, he who knows at all times where to find a hare, even if he knew not one single thing else but the way to his mouth, cannot be called an ignorant man—is probably a better-informed man in the long run than the friend on his right, discoursing about the Turks, the Greeks, the Portugals, and all that sort of thing, giving himself the lie on every arrival of his daily paper. We never yet knew an old courser, (him of the Sporting Annals included,) who was not a man both of abilities and virtues. But where were we?—at the Trysting-hill Farmhouse, jocularly called Hunger-them-Out.

Line is formed, and with measured steps we march towards the hills—for we ourselves are the schoolboy, bold, bright, and blooming as the rose—fleet of foot almost as the very antelope—Oh! now, alas! dim and withered as a stalk from which winter has swept all the blossoms—slow as the sloth along the ground—spindle-shanked as a lean and slippered pantaloon!

"O heaven! that from our bright and shining years
Age would but take the things youth needed not!"

An old shepherd meets us on the long sloping rushy ascent to the hills—and putting his brown withered finger to his gnostic nose, intimates that she is in her old form behind the dike—and the noble dumb animals, with pricked-up ears and brandished tail, are aware that her hour is come. Plash, plash, through the marsh, and then on the dry furze beyond, you see her large dark-brown eyes—Soho, soho, soho—Holloo, halloo, halloo—for a moment the seemingly horned creature appears to dally with the danger, and to linger ere she lays her lugs on her shoulder, and away, like thoughts pursuing thoughts—away fly hare and hounds towards the mountain.

Stand all still for a minute—for not a bush the height of our knee to break our view—and is not that brattling burst up the brae "beautiful exceedingly," and sufficient to chain in admiration the beatings of the rudest gazer's heart? Yes; of all beautiful sights—none more, none so much so, as the miraculous motion of a four-footed wild animal, changed at once, from a seeming inert sod or stone, into flight fleet as that of the falcon's wing! Instinct against instinct! fear and ferocity in one flight! Pursuers and pursued bound together, in every turning and twisting of their career, by the operation of two headlong passions! Now they are all three upon her—and

she dies! No! glancing aside, like a bullet from a wall, she bounds almost at a right angle from her straight course—and, for a moment, seems to have made good her escape. Shooting headlong one over the other, all three, with erected tails, suddenly bring themselves up—like racing barks when down goes the helm, and one after another, bowsprit and boom almost entangled, rounds the buoy, and again bears up on the starboard tack upon a wind—and in a close line, head to heel, so that you might cover them all with a sheet—again, all open-mouthed on her haunches, seem to drive, and go with her over the cliff.

We are all on foot—and pray what horse could gallop through among all these quagmires, over all the hags in these peat-mosses, over all the water-cressy and puddocky ditches, sinking soft on hither and thither side, even to the two-legged leaper's ankle or knee—up that hill on the perpendicular strewn with flint-shivers—down these loose-hanging cliffs—through that brake of old stunted birches with stools hard as iron—over that mile of quaking muir where the plover breeds—and—finally—up—up—up to where the dwarfed heather dies away among the cinders, and in winter you might mistake a flock of partridge for a patch of snow?

The thing is impossible—so we are all on foot—and the fleetest keeper that ever footed it in Scotland shall not in a run of three miles give us sixty yards. "Ha! Peter the wild boy, how are you off for wind?"—we exultingly exclaim, in giving Red-jacket the go-by on the bent. But see—see—they are bringing her back again down the Red Mount—glancing aside, she throws them all three out—yes, all three, and few enow too, though fair play be a jewel—and ere they can recover, she is a-head a hundred yards up the hill. There is a beautiful trial of bone and bottom! Now one, and then another, takes almost imperceptibly the lead; but she steals away from them inch by inch—beating them all blind—and, suddenly disappearing—Heaven knows how—leaves them all in the lurch. With out-lolling tongues, hanging heads, panting sides, and drooping tails, they come one by one down the steep, looking somewhat sheepish, and then lie down together on their sides, as if indeed about to die in defeat. She has carried away her cocked fud unscathed for the third time, from Three of the Best in all broad Scotland—nor can there any longer be the smallest doubt in the world, in the minds of the most skeptical, that she is—what all the country-side have long known her to be—a Witch.

From cat-killing to Coursing, we have seen that the transition is easy in the order of nature—and so it is from coursing to Fox-Hunting—by means, however, of a small intermediate step—the Harriers. Musical is a pack of harriers as a peal of bells. How melodiously they ring changes in the woods, and in the hollow of the mountains! A level country we have already consigned to merited contempt, (though there is no rule without an exception; and as we shall see by and by, there is one too here,) and commend us, even with harriers, to the ups and downs of the pas-

toral or silvan heights. If old or indolent, take your station on a heaven-kissing hill, and hug the echoes to your heart. Or, if you will ride, then let it be on a nimble galloway of some fourteen hands, that can gallop a good pace on the road, and keep sure footing on bridle paths, or upon the pathless braes—and by judicious horsemanship, you may meet the pack at many a loud-mouthed burst, and haply be not far out at the death. But the schoolboy and the shepherd—and the whipper-in—as each hopes for favour from his own Diana—let them all be on foot—and have studied the country for every imaginable variety that can occur in the winter's campaign. One often hears of a cunning old fox—but the cunningest old fox is a simpleton to the most guileless young hare. What deceit in every double! What calculation in every squat! Of what far more complicated than Cretan Labyrinth is the creature, now hunted for the first time, sitting in the centre! a listening the baffled roar! Now into the pool she plunges, to free herself from the fatal scent that lures on death. Now down the torrent course she runs and leaps, to cleanse it from her poor paws, fur-protected from the sharp flints that lame the fiends that so sorely beset her, till many limp along in their own blood. Now along the coping of stone walls she crawls and scrambles—and now ventures from the wood along the frequented high-road, heedless of danger from the front, so that she may escape the horrid growling in the rear. Now into the pretty little garden of the wayside, or even the village cot, she creeps, as if to implore protection from the innocent children, or the nursing mother. Yes, she will even seek refuge in the sanctuary of the cradle. The terrier drags her out from below a tombstone, and she dies in the churchyard. The hunters come reeking and reeling on, we ourselves among the number—and to the winding horn that echoes reply from the walls of the house of worship—and now, in momentary contrition,

"Drops a sad, serious tear upon our playful pen!"

and we bethink ourselves—alas! all in vain for

"*Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret*"—

of these solemn lines of the poet of peace and humanity:—

"One lesson reader, let us two divide,
Taught by what nature shows and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure and our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

It is next to impossible to reduce fine poetry to practice—so let us conclude with a panegyric on Fox-Hunting. The passion for this pastime is the very strongest that can possess the heart—nor, of all the heroes of antiquity, is there one to our imagination more poetical than Nimrod. His whole character is given, and his whole history, in two words—Mighty Hunter. That he hunted the fox is not probable; for the sole aim and end of his existence was not to exterminate—that would have been cutting his own throat—but to thin man-devouring wild beasts—the Pards—with Leo at their head. But in a land like this, where not even a wolf has existed for centuries—nor a wild boar—the same spirit that would have driven the British youth on the tusk and paw of the

Lion and the Tiger, mounts them in scarlet on such steeds as never neighed before the flood, nor "summered high in bliss" on the sloping pastures of undeluged Ararat—and gathers them together in gallant array on the edge of the cover,

"When first the hunter's startling horn is heard
Upon the golden hills."

What a squadron of cavalry! What fiery eyes and flaming nostrils—betokening with what ardent passion the noble animals will revel in the chase! Bay, brown, black, dun, chestnut sorrel, gray—of all shades and hues—and every courser distinguished by his own peculiar character of shape and form—yet all blending harmoniously as they crown the mount; so that a painter would only have to group and colour them as they stand, nor lose, if able to catch them, one of the dazzling lights or deepening shadows streamed on them from that sunny, yet not unstormy sky.

You read in books of travels and romances, of Barbs and Arabs galloping in the desert—and well doth Sir Walter speak of Saladin at the head of his Saracenic chivalry; but take our word for it, great part of all such descriptions are mere falsehood or fudge. Why in the devil's name should dwellers in the desert always be going at full speed? And how can that full speed be any thing more than a slow heavy hand-gallop at the best, the barbs being up to the belly at every stroke? They are always, it is said, in high condition—but we, who know something about horse-flesh, give that assertion the lie. They have seldom any thing either to eat or drink; they are as lean as church mice; and covered with clammy sweat before they have ambled a league from the tent. And then such a set of absurd riders, with knees up to their noses, like so many tailors riding to Brentford, *viâ* the deserts of Arabia! Such bits, such bridles, and such saddles! But the whole set-out, rider and ridden, accoutrements and all, is too much for one's gravity, and must occasion a frequent laugh to the wild ass as he goes braying unharnessed by. But look there! Arabian blood, and British bone! Not bred in and in, to the death of all the fine strong animal spirits—but blood intermingled and interfused by twenty crosses, nature exulting in each successive produce, till her power can no further go, and in yonder glorious grey,

"Gives the world assurance of a horse!"

Form the Three Hundred into squadron, or squadrons, and in the hand of each rider a sabre alone, none of your lances, all bare his breast but for the silver-laced blue, the gorgeous uniform of the Hussars of England—confound all cuirasses and cuirassiers!—let the trumpet sound a charge, and ten thousand of the proudest of the Barbaric chivalry be opposed with spear and scimitar—and through their snow-ranks will the Three Hundred go like thaw—splitting them into dissolution with the noise of thunder.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it; and where, we ask, were the British cavalry ever overthrown? And how could the great north-country horse-couplers perform their con-

tracts, but for the triumphs of the Turf? Blood—blood there must be, either for strength, or speed, or endurance. The very heaviest cavalry—the Life Guards and the Scots Greys, and all other dragoons, must have blood. But without racing and fox-hunting, where could it be found? Such pastimes nerve one of the arms of the nation when in battle; but for them 'twould be palsied. What better education, too, not only for a horse, but his rider, before playing a bloodier game in his first war campaign? Thus he becomes demicorpsed with the noble animal; and what easy, equable motion to him is afterwards a charge over a wide level plain, with nothing in the way but a few regiments of flying Frenchmen! The hills and dales of merry England have been the best riding-school to her gentlemen—her gentlemen who have not lived at home at ease—but, with Paget, and Stewart, and Seymour, and Cotton, and Somerset, and Vivian, have left their hereditary halls, and all the peaceful pastimes pursued among the silvan scenery, to try the mettle of their steeds, and cross swords with the vaunted Gallic chivalry; and still have they been in the shock victorious; witness the skirmish that astonished Napoleon at Saldanha—the overthrow that uncrowned him at Waterloo!

"Well, do you know, that, after all you have said, Mr. North, I cannot understand the passion and the pleasure of fox-hunting. It seems to me both cruel and dangerous."

Cruelty! Is their cruelty in laying the rein on their necks, and delivering them up to the transport of their high condition—for every throbbing vein is visible—at the first full burst of that maddening cry, and letting loose to their delight the living thunderbolts? Danger! What danger but of breaking their own legs, necks, or backs, and those of their riders? And what right have you to complain of that, lying all your length, a huge hulking fellow, snoring and snorting half-asleep on a sofa, sufficient to sicken a whole street? What though it be but a smallish, reddish-brown, sharp-nosed animal, with pricked-up ears, and passionately fond of poultry, that they pursue? After the first Tally-ho, Reynard is rarely seen, till he is run in upon—once, perhaps, in the whole run, skirting a wood, or crossing a common. It is an Idea that is pursued, on a whirlwind of horses, to a storm of canine music—worthy, both, of the largest lion that ever leaped among a band of Moors, sleeping at midnight by an extinguished fire on the African sands. There is, we verily believe it, nothing Foxy in the Fancy of one man in all that glorious field of Three Hundred. Once off and away—while wood and welkin rings—and nothing is felt—nothing is imaged in that hurricane flight, but scorn of all obstructions, dikes, ditches, drains, brooks, palings, canals, rivers, and all the impediments reared in the way of so many rejoicing madmen, by nature, art, and science, in an inclosed, cultivated, civilized, and Christian country. There they go—prince and peer, baronet and squire—the nobility and gentry of England, the flower of the men of the earth, each on such a steed as Pollux never reined, nor Philip's warlike son—for could we imagine

Bucephalus here, ridden by his own tamer, Alexander would be thrown out during the very first burst, and glad to find his way dismounted to a village alehouse for a pail of meal and water. Hedges, trees, groves, gardens, orchards, woods, farmhouses, huts, halls, mansions, palaces, spires, steeples, towers, and temples, all go wavering by, each demigod seeing, or seeing them not, as his winged steed skims or labours along, to the swelling or sinking music, now loud as a near regimental band, now faint as an echo. Far and wide over the country are dispersed the scarlet runners—and a hundred villages pour forth their admiring swarms, as the main current of the chase roars by, or parted runlets float wearied and all astray, lost at last in the perplexing woods. Crash goes the top-timber of the five-barred gate—away over the ears flies the ex-rough-rider in a surprising somerset—after a succession of stumbles, down is the gallant Grey on knees and nose, making sad work among the fallow—Friendship is a fine thing, and the story of Damon and Pythias most affecting indeed—but Pylades eyes Orestes on his back sorely drowned in sludge, and tenderly leaping over him as he lies, claps his hands to his ear, and with a “hark forward, tantivy!” leaves him to remount, lame and at leisure—and ere the fallen has risen and shaken himself, is round the corner of the white village-church, down the dell, over the brook and close on the heels of the straining pack, all a-yell up the hill crowned by the Squire’s Folly. “Every man for himself, and God for us all,” is the devout and ruling apothegm of the day. If death befall, what wonder? since man and horse are mortal; but death loves better a wide soft bed with quiet curtains and darkened windows in a still room, the clergyman in one corner with his prayers, and the physician in another with his pills, making assurance doubly sure, and preventing all possibility of the dying Christian’s escape. Let oak branch smite the too slowly stooping skull, or rider’s back not timely levelled with his steed’s; let faithless bank give way, and bury in the brook; let hidden drain yield to fore feet and work a sudden wreck; let old coal-pit, with briery mouth, betray; and roaring river bear down man and horse, to cliffs unscalable by the very Welch goat; let duke’s or earl’s son go sheer over a quarry twenty feet deep, and as many high; yet “Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,” the hunter train flows on; for the music grows fiercer and more savage—lo! all that remains together of the pack, in far more dreadful madness than hydrophobia, leaping out of their skins, under insanity from the scent, for Vulpes can hardly now make a crawl of it; and ere he, they, whipper-in, or any one of the other three demoniacs, have time to lose in one another’s splashed faces, he is torn into a thousand pieces, gobbled up in the general growl; and smug, and smooth, and dry, and warm, and cozy, as he was an hour and twenty-five minutes ago exactly, in his furze bush in the cover—he is now piecemeal in about thirty distinct stomachs; and is he not, pray, well off for sepulture?

FYTTE SECOND.

WE are always unwilling to speak of ourselves, lest we should appear egotistical—for egotism we detest. Yet the sporting world must naturally be anxious to know something of our early history—and their anxiety shall therefore be now assuaged. The truth is, that we enjoyed some rare advantages and opportunities in our boyhood regarding field sports, and grew up, even from that first great era in every Lowlander’s life, Breeching-day, not only a fisher but a fowler; and it is necessary that we enter into some interesting details.

There had been from time immemorial, it was understood, in the Manse, a duck-gun of very great length, and a musket that, according to an old tradition, had been out both in the Seventeen and Forty-five. There were ten boys of us, and we succeeded by rotation to gun or musket, each boy retaining possession for a single day only; and then the shooting season continued all the year. They must have been of admirable materials and workmanship; for neither of them so much as once burst during the Seven Years’ War. The musket, who, we have often since thought, must surely rather have been a blunderbuss in disguise, was a perfect devil for kicking when she received her discharge; so much so indeed, that it was reckoned creditable for the smaller boys not to be knocked down by the recoil. She had a very wide mouth—and was thought by us “an awfu’ scatterer;” a qualification which we considered of the very highest merit. She carried any thing we choose to put into her—there still being of all her performances a loud and favourable report—balls, buttons, chucky-stanes, slugs, or hail. She had but two faults—she had got addicted, probably in early life, to one habit of burning priming, and to another of hanging fire; habits of which it was impossible, for us at least, to break her by the most assiduous hammering of many a new series of flints; but such was the high place she justly occupied in the affection and admiration of us all, that faults like these did not in the least detract from her general character. Our delight, when she did absolutely and positively and *bonâ fide go off*, was in proportion to the comparative rarity of that occurrence; and as to hanging fire—why we used to let her take her own time, contriving to keep her at the level as long as our strength sufficed, eyes shut perhaps, teeth clenched, face gurning, and head slightly averted over the right shoulder, till Muckle-mou’d Meg, who, like most other Scottish females, took things leisurely, went off at last with an explosion like the blowing up of a rock.

The “Lang gun,” again, was of much gentler disposition, and, instead of kicking, ran into the opposite extreme on being let off, inclining forwards as if she would follow the shot. We believe, however, this apparent peculiarity arose from her extreme length, which rendered it difficult for us to hold her horizontally—and hence the muzzle being attracted earthward, the entire gun appeared to leave the shoulder of the Shooter. That such

is the true theory of the phenomenon seems to be proved by this—that when the “Lang Gun” was, in the act of firing, laid across the shoulders of two boys standing about a yard the one before the other, she kicked every bit as well as the blunderbuss. Her lock was of a very peculiar construction. It was so contrived that, when on full cock, the dog-head, as we used to call it, stood back at least seven inches, and unless the flint was put in to a nicety, by pulling the trigger you by no means caused any uncovering of the pan, but things in general remained *in statu quo*—and there was perfect silence. She had a worm-eaten stock into which the barrel seldom was able to get itself fairly inserted; and even with the aid of circumvoluting twine, ’twas always coggly. Thus, too, the vizey (*Anglice* sight) generally inclined unduly to one side or the other, and was the cause of all of us every day hitting and hurting objects of whose existence even we were not aware, till alarmed by the lowing or the galloping of cattle on the hills; and we hear now the yell of an old woman in black bonnet and red cloak, who shook her staff at us like a witch, with the blood running down the furrows of her face, and with many oaths maintained that she was murdered. The “Lang Gun” had certainly a strong vomit—and, with slugs or swan-shot, was dangerous at two hundred yards to any living thing. Bob Howie, at that distance arrested the career of a mad dog—a single slug having been sent through the eye into the brain. We wonder if one or both of those companions of our boyhood be yet alive—or, like many other great guns that have since made more noise in the world, fallen a silent prey to the rust of oblivion.

Not a boy in the school had a game certificate—or, as it was called in the parish—“a leeshance.” Nor, for a year or two, was such a permit necessary; as we confined ourselves almost exclusively to sparrows. Not that we had any personal animosity to the sparrow individually—on the contrary, we loved him, and had a tame one—a fellow of infinite fancy—with comb and wattles of crimson cloth like a gamecock. But their numbers, without number numberless, seemed to justify the humanest of boys in killing any quantity of sprauks. Why, they would sometimes settle on the clipped half-thorn and half-beech hedge of the Manse garden in myriads, midge-like; and then out any two of us, whose day it happened to be, used to sally with Muckle-mou’d Meg and the Lang Gun, charged two hands and a finger; and with a loud shout, startling them from their roost like the sudden casting of a swarm of bees, we let drive into the whir—a shower of feathers was instantly seen swimming in the air, and flower-bed and onion bed covered with scores of the mortally wounded old cocks with black heads, old hens with brown, and the pride of the eaves laid low before their first crop of peas! Never was there such a parish for sparrows. You had but to fling a stone into any stack-yard, and up rose a sprauk-shower. The thatch of every cottage was drilled by them like honey-combs. House-spouts were of no use in rainy weather—for they were all choked up by sprauk-nests. At

each particular barn-door, when the farmers were at work, you might have thought you saw the entire sparrow population of the parish. Seldom a Sabbath, during pairing, building, breeding, nursing, and training season, could you hear a single syllable of the sermon for their sakes, all a-huddle and a-chirp in the bel fry and among the old loose slates. On every stercoraceous deposit on coach, cart, or bridle road, they were busy on grain and pulse; and, in spite of cur and cat, legions embrowned every cottage garden. Emigration itself in many million families would have left no perceptible void; and the inextinguishable multitude would have laughed at the Plague.

The other small birds of the parish began to feel their security from our shot, and sung their best, unscared on hedge, bush, and tree. Perhaps, too, for sake of their own sweet strains, we spared the lyrists of Scotland, the linnet and the lark, the one in the yellow broom, the other beneath the rosy cloud—while there was ever a sevenfold red shield before Robin’s breast, whether flitting silent as a falling leaf, or trilling his autumnal lay on the rigging or pointed gable-end of barn or brye. Now and then the large bunting, conspicuous on a top-twig, and proud of his rustic psalmody, tempted his own doom—or the cunning stone-chat, glancing about the old dikes usually shot at in vain—or yellow-hammer, under the ban of the national superstition, with a drop of the devil’s blood beneath his pretty crest, pretty in spite of that cruel creed—or green-finch, too rich in plumage for his poorer song—or shilfa, the beautiful nest-builder, shivering his white-plumed wings in shade and sunshine, in joy the most rapturous, in grief the most despairing of all the creatures of the air—or redpole, balanced on the down of the thistle or flower of the bunweed on the old clovery lea—or, haply twice seen in a season, the very goldfinch himself, a radiant and gorgeous spirit brought on the breeze from afar, and worthy, if only slightly wounded, of being enclosed within a silver cage from Fairy Land.

But we waxed more ambitious as we grew old—and then we to the rookery on the elm-tree grove! Down dropt the dark denizens in dozens, rebounding with a thud and a skraigh from the velvet moss, which under that umbrage formed firm floor for Titania’s feet—while others kept dangling dead or dying by the claws, cheating the crusted pie, and all the blue skies above were intercepted by cawing clouds of distracted parents, now dipping down in despair almost within a shot, and now, as if sick of this world, soaring away up into the very heavens, and disappearing to return no more—till sunset should bring silence, and the night air roll off the horrid smell of sulphur from the desolated bowers; and then indeed would they come all flying back upon their strong instinct, like black-sailed barks before the wind, some from the depth of far-off fir-woods, where they had lain quacking at the ceaseless cannonade, some from the furrows of the new-braided fields aloof on the uplands, some from deep dell close at hand, and some from the middle of the moorish wilderness.

Happiest of all human homes, beautiful

Craig-Hall! For so even now dost thou appear to be—in the rich, deep, mellow, green light of imagination trembling on tower and tree—art thou yet undilapidated and undecayed, in thy old manorial solemnity almost majestic, though even then thou hadst long been tenanted but by a humble farmer's family—people of low degree! The evening-festival of the First Day of the Rooks—nay, scoff not at such an anniversary—was still held in thy ample kitchen—of old the bower of brave lords and ladies bright—while the harper, as he sung his song of love or war, kept his eyes fixed on her who sat beneath the deas. The days of chivalry were gone—and the days had come of curds and cream, and, preferred by some people though not by us, of cream-cheese. Old men and old women, widowers and widows, yet all alike cheerful and chatty at a great age, for often as they near the dead, how more life-like seem the living! Middle-aged men and middle-aged women, husbands and wives, those sedate, with hair combed straight on their foreheads, sun-burnt faces, and horny hands established on their knees—these serene, with countenances many of them not unlovely—comely all—and with arms decently folded beneath their matronly bosoms—as they sat in their holiday dresses, feeling as if the season of youth had hardly yet flown by, or were, on such a merry meeting, for a blink restored! Boys and virgins—those bold even in their bashfulness—these blushing whenever eyes met eyes—nor would they—nor could they—have spoken in the hush to save their souls; yet ere the evening star arose, many a pretty maiden had, down looking and playing with the hem, of her garment, sung linnet-like her ain favourite auld Scottish sang! and many a sweet sang even then delighted Scotia's spirit, though Robin Burns was but a youth—walking mute among the wild-flowers on the moor—nor aware of the immortal melodies soon to breathe from his impassioned heart!

Of all the year's holidays, not even excepting the First of May, this was the most delightful. The First of May, longed for so passionately from the first peep of the primrose, sometimes came deformed with mist and cloud, or cheerless with whistling winds, or winter-like with a sudden fall of snow. And thus all our hopes were dashed—the roomy hay-wagon remained in its shed—the preparations made for us in the distant moorland farmhouse were vain—the fishing-rods hung useless on the nails—and disconsolate schoolboys sat moping in corners, sorry, ashamed, and angry with Scotland's springs. But though the "leafy month of June" be frequently showery, it is almost always sunny too. Every half hour there is such a radiant blink that the young heart sings aloud for joy; summer rain makes the hair grow, and hats are little or no use towards the Longest Day; there is something cheerful even in thunder, if it be not rather too near; the lark has not yet ceased altogether to sing, for he soars over his second nest, unappalled beneath the sablest cloud; the green earth repels from her refulgent bosom the blackest shadows, nor will suffer herself to be saddened in the fulness and

brightness of her contentment; through the heaviest flood the blue skies will still be making their appearance with an impatient smile, and all the rivers and burns, with the multitude of their various voices, sing praises unto Heaven.

Therefore, bathing our feet in beauty, we went bounding over the flowery fields and broomy braes to the grove-girdled Craig-Hall. During the long noisy day, we thought not of the coming evening, happy as we knew it was to be; and during the long and almost as noisy evening, we forgot all the pastime of the day. Weeks before, had each of us engaged his partner for the first country dance, by right his own when supper came, and to sit close to him with her tender side, with waist at first stealthily arm-encircle, and at last boldly and almost with proud display. In the churchyard, before or after Sabbath-service, a word whispered into the ear of blooming and blushing rustic sufficed; or if that opportunity failed, the angler had but to step into her father's burn-side cottage, and with the contents of his basket leave a tender request, and from behind the gable-end carry away a word, a smile a kiss, and a waving farewell.

Many a high-roofed hall have we, since those days, seen, made beautiful with festoons and garlands, beneath the hand of taste and genius decorating, for some splendid festival, the abode of the noble expecting a still nobler guest. But oh! what pure bliss, and what profound, was then breathed into the bosom of boyhood from that glorious branch of hawthorn, in the chimney—itself almost a tree, so thick—so deep—so rich its load of blossoms—so like its fragrance to something breathed from heaven—and so transitory in its sweetness too, that as she approached to inhale it, down fell many a snow-flake to the virgin's breath—in an hour all melted quite away! No broom that now-a-days grows on the brae, so yellow as the broom—the golden broom—the broom that seemed still to keep the hills in sunlight long after the sun himself had sunk—the broom in which we first found the lintwhite's nest—and of its petals, more precious than pearls, saw framed a wreath for the dark hair of that dark-eyed girl, an orphan, and melancholy even in her merriment—dark-haired and dark-eyed indeed, but whose forehead, whose bosom, were yet whiter than the driven snow. Greenhouses—conservatories—orangeries—are exquisitely balmy still—and, in presence of these strange plants, one could believe that he had been transported to some rich foreign clime. But now we carry the burden of our years along with us—and that consciousness bedims the blossoms, and makes mournful the balm, as from flowers in some fair burial-place, breathing of the tomb. But oh! that Craig-Hall hawthorn! and oh! that Craig-Hall broom! they send their sweet rich scent so far into the hushed air of memory, that all the weary worn-out weaknesses of age drop from us like a garment, and even now—the flight of that swallow seems more aerial—more alive with bliss his clay-built nest—the ancient long-ago blue of the sky returns to heaven—not for many a, many a long year have we seen so fair—so frail—so

transparent and angel-mantle-looking a cloud! The very viol speaks—the very dance responds in Craig-Hall: this—this is the very festival of the First Day of the Rooks—Mary Mather, the pride of the parish—the county—the land—the earth—is our partner—and long mayest thou, O moon! remain behind thy cloud—when the parting kiss is given—and the lover, at that tenderest moment, dropped into her bosom!

But we have lost the thread of our discourse, and must pause to search for it, even like a spinster of old, in the disarranged spindle of one of those pretty little wheels now heard no more in the humble ingle, hushed by machinery clink-clanking with power-looms in every town and city of the land. Another year, and we often found ourselves—alone—or with one chosen comrade; for even then we began to have our sympathies and antipathies, not only with roses and lilies, or to cats and cheese, but with or to the eyes, and looks, and foreheads, and hair, and voices, and motions, and silence, and rest of human beings, loving them with a perfect love—we must not say hating them with a perfect hatred—alone or with a friend, among the mists and marshes of moors, in silent and stealthy search of the solitary curlew, that is, the Whawp! At first sight of his long bill aloft above the rushes, we could hear our heart beating quick time in the desert; at the turning of his neck, the body being yet still, our heart ceased to beat altogether—and we grew sick with hope when near enough to see the wild beauty of his eye. Unfolded, like a thought, was then the brown silence of the shy creature's ample wings—and with a warning cry he wheeled away upon the wind, unharmed by our ineffectual hail, seen falling far short of the deceptive distance, while his mate that had lain couched—perhaps in her nest of eggs or young, exposed yet hidden—within killing range, half-running, half-flying, flapped herself into flight, simulating lame leg and wounded wing; and the two disappearing together behind the hills, left us in our vain reason thwarted by instinct, to resume with live hopes rising out of the ashes of the dead, our daily-disappointed quest over the houseless mosses. Yet now and then to our steady aim the bill of the whawp disgorged blood—and as we felt the feathers in our hand, and from tip to tip eyed the outstretched wings, Fortune, we felt, had no better boon to bestow, earth no greater triumph.

Hush—stoop—kneel—crawl—for by all our hopes of mercy—a heron—a heron! An eel dangling across his bill! And now the water-serpent has disappeared! From morning dawn hath the fowl been fishing here—perhaps on that very stone—for it is one of those days when eels are a-roaming in the shallows, and the heron knows that they are as likely to pass by that stone as any other—from morning dawn—and 'tis now past meridian, half-past two! Be propitious, oh ye Fates! and never—never—shall he again fold his wings on the edge of his gaping nest, on the trees that overtop the only tower left of the old castle. Another eel! and we too can crawl silent as the sinuous

serpent. Flash! Bang! over he goes dead—no, not dead—but how unlike that unavailing flapping, as head over heels he goes spinning over the tarn, to the serene unsettling of himself from sod or stone, when, his hunger sated, and his craw filled with fish for his far-off brood, he used to lift his blue bulk into the air, and with long depending legs, at first floated away like a wearied thing, but soon, as his plumes felt the current of air homewards flowing, urged swifter and swifter his easy course—laggard and lazy no more—leaving leagues behind him, ere you had shifted your motion in watching his cloudblike career, soon invisible among the woods!

The disgorged eels are returned—some of them alive—to their native element—the mud. And the dead heron floats away before small winds and waves into the middle of the tarn. Where is he—the matchless Newfoundland—*nomine gaudens* Fro, because white as the froth of the sea? Off with a colley. So—stript with the first intention, we plunge from a rock, and,

“Though in the scowl of heaven, the tarn
Grows dark as we are swimming.”

Draco-like, breast-high, we stem the surge, and with the heron floating before us, return to the heather-fringed shore, and give three cheers that startle the echoes, asleep from year's end to year's end, in the Grey-Linn Cairn.

Into the silent twilight of many a wild rock-and-river scene, beautiful and bewildering as the fairy work of sleep, will he find himself brought who knows where to seek the heron in all his solitary haunts. For often when the moors are storm-swept, and his bill would be baffled by the waves of tarn and loch, he sails away from his swinging-tree, and through some open glade dipping down to the secluded stream, alights within the calm chasm, and folds his wings in the breezeless air. The clouds are driving fast aloft in a carry from the sea—but they are all reflected in that pellucid pool—so perfect the cliff-guarded repose. A better day—a better hour—a better minute for fishing could not have been chosen by Mr. Heron, who is already swallowing a par. Another—and another—but something falls from the rock into the water; and suspicious, though unalarmed, he leisurely addresses himself to a short flight up the channel—round that tower-like cliff standing strangely by itself, with a crest of self-sown flowering shrubs; and lo! another vista, if possible, just a degree more silent—more secluded—more solitary—beneath the mid-day night of woods! To shoot thee there—would be as impious as to have killed a sacred Ibis stalking in the shade of an Egyptian temple. Yet it is fortunate for thee—folded up there, as thou art, as motionless as thy sitting-stone—that at this moment we have no fire-arms—for we had heard of a fish-like trout in that very pool, and this—O Heron—is no gun but a rod. Thou believest thyself to be in utter solitude—no sportsman but thyself in the chasm—for the otter, thou knowest, loves not such very rocky rivers; and fish with bitten shoulder seldom lies here—that epicure's tasted prey. Yet

within ten yards of thee lies couched thy enemy, who once had a design upon thee, even in the very egg. Our mental soliloquy disturbs not thy watchful sense—for the air stirs not when the soul thinks, or feels, or fancies about man, bird, or beast. We feel, O Heron! that there is not only humanity—but poetry, in our being. Imagination haunts and possesses us in our pastimes, colouring them even with serious—solemn—and sacred light—and thou assuredly hast something priest-like and ancient in thy look—and about thy light-blue plume robes, which the very elements admire and reverence—the waters wetting them not—nor the winds ruffling—and moreover we love thee—Heron—for the sake of that old castle, beside whose gloom thou utterest thy first feeble cry! A Ruin nameless, traditionless—sole, undisputed property of Oblivion!

Hurra!—Heron—hurra! why, that was an awkward tumble—and very nearly had we hold of thee by the tail! Didst thou take us for a water-kelpie? A fright like that is enough to leave thee an idiot all the rest of thy life. 'Tis a wonder thou didst not go into fits—but thy nerves must be sorely shaken—and what an account of this adventure will certainly be shrieked unto thy mate, to the music of the creaking boughs! Not, even wert thou a secular bird of ages, wouldst thou ever once again revisit this dreadful place. For fear has a wondrous memory in all dumb creatures—and rather wouldst thou see thy nest die of famine, than seek for fish in this monster-haunted pool! Farewell! farewell!

Many are the hundreds of hill and mountain lochs to us as familiarly known, round all their rushy or rocky margins, as that pond there in the garden of Buchanan Lodge. That pond has but one goose and one gander, and nine goslings—about half-a-dozen trouts, if indeed they have not sickened and died of Nostalgia, missing in the stillness the gurgle of their native Tweed—and a brace of perch, now nothing but prickle. But the lochs—the hill, the mountain lochs now in our mind's eye and our mind's ear,—heaven and earth! the bogs are black with duck, teal, and widgeon—up there "comes for food or play" to the holla of the winds, a wedge of wild geese, piercing the marbled heavens with clamour—and lo! in the very centre of the mediterranean, the Royal Family of the Swans! Up springs the silver sea-trout in the sunshine—see Sir Humphrey!—a salmon—a salmon fresh run in love and glory from the sea!

For how many admirable articles are there themes in the above short paragraph! Duck, teal, and widgeon, wild-geese, swans! And first, duck, teal, and widgeon. There they are, all collected together, without regard to party politics, in their very best attire, as thick as the citizens of Edinburgh, their wives, sweet-hearts, and children, on the Calton Hill, on the first day of the king's visit to Scotland. As thick, but not so steady—for what swimming about in circles—what ducking and diving is there!—all the while accompanied with a sort of low, thick, gurgling, not unsweet, nor unmusical quackery, the expression of the intense joy of feeding, freedom, and play. Oh! Muc-

kle-mou'd Meg! neither thou nor the "Lang Gun" are of any avail here—for that old drake, who, together with his shadow, on which he seems to be sitting, is almost as big as a boat in the water, the outermost landward sentinel, near as he seems to be in the deception of the clear frosty air, is yet better than three hundred yards from the shore—and, at safe distance, cocks his eye at the fowler. There is no boat on the loch, and knowing that, how tempting in its unapproachable reeds and rushes, and hut-crested knoll—a hut built perhaps by some fowler, in the olden time—yon central Isle! But be still as a shadow—for lo! a batch of Whig-seceders, paddling all by themselves towards that creek—and as surely as our name is Christopher, in another quarter of an hour, they will consist of killed, wounded, and missing. On our belly—with unhatted head just peering over the knowe—and Muckle-mou'd Meg slowly and softly stretched out on the rest, so as not to rustle a windle-strae, we lie motionless as a mawkin, till the coterie collects together for simultaneous dive down to the aquatic plants and insects of the fast-shallowing bay; and, just as they are upon the turn with their tails, a single report, loud as a volley, scatters the unsparing slugs about their douns, and the still clear water, in sudden disturbance, is afloat with scattered feathers, and stained with blood.

Now is the time for the snow-white, here and there ebon-spotted Fro—who with burning eyes has lain couched like a spaniel, his quick breath ever and anon trembling on a passionate whine, to bounce up, as if discharged by a catapult, and first with immense and enormous high-and-far leaps, and then, fleet as any greyhound, with a breast-brushing brattle down the brae, to dash, all fours, like a flying squirrel fearlessly from his tree, many yards into the bay with one splashing and momentarily disappearing spang, and then, head and shoulders and broad line of back and rudder tail, all elevated above or level with the wavy water line, to mouth first that murdered mawsey of a mallard, lying as still as if she had been dead for years, with her round, fat, brown bosom towards heaven—then that old Drake, in a somewhat similar posture, but in more gorgeous apparel, his belly being of a pale gray, and his back delicately pencilled and crossed with numberless waved dusky lines—precious prize to one skilled like us in the angling art—next—nobly done, glorious Fro—that cream colour crowned widgeon, with bright rufus chestnut breast, separated from the neck by loveliest waved ash-brown and white lines, while our mind's eye feasteth on the indescribable and changeable green beauty-spot of his wings—and now, if we mistake not, a Golden Eye, best described by his name—finally, that exquisite little duck the Teal; yes, poetical in its delicately pencilled spots as an Indian shell, and when kept to an hour, roasted to a minute, gravied in its own wild richness, with some few other means and appliances to boot, carved finely—most finely—by razor-like knife, in a hand skilful to dissect and cunning to divide—tasted by a tongue and palate both healthily pure as the dewy petal of a morning

rose—swallowed by a gullet felt gradually to be extending itself in its intense delight—and received into a stomach yawning with greed and gratitude,—oh! surely the thrice-blessed of all web-footed birds; the apex of Apician luxury; and able, were any thing on the face of this feeble earth able, to detain a soul, on the very brink of fate, a short quarter of an hour from an inferior Elysium!

How nobly, like a craken or sea-serpent, Fro reareth his massy head above the foam, his gathered prey seized—all four—by their limber necks, and brightening, like a bunch of flowers, as they glitter towards the shore! With one bold body-shake, felt to the point of each particular hair, he scatters the water from his coat like mist, reminding one of that glorious line in Shakspeare,

“Like dewdrops from the Lion’s mane,”

advancing with sinewy legs seemingly lengthened by the drenching flood, and dripping tail stretched out in all its broad longitude, with hair almost like white hanging plumes—magnificent as tail of the Desert-Born at the head of his seraglio in the Arabian Sands. Halfway his master meets his beloved Fro on the slope; and first proudly and haughtily pausing to mark our eye, and then humbly, as becometh one whom nature, in his boldest and brightest bearing, hath yet made a slave—he lays the offering at our feet, and having felt on his capacious forehead the approving pressure of our hand,

“While, like the murmur of a dream,
He hears us breathe his name,”

he suddenly flings himself round with a wheel of transport, and in many a widening circle pursues his own uncontrollable ecstasies with whirlwind speed; till, as if utterly joy-exhausted, he brings his snow-white bulk into dignified repose on a knoll, that very moment illuminated by a burst of sunshine!

Not now—as fades upon our pen the solemn light of the dying day—shall we dare to decide, whether or not Nature—O most matchless creature of thy kind!—gave thee, or gave thee not, the gift of an immortal soul! Better such creed—fond and foolish though it may be—yet scarcely unscriptural, for in each word of scripture there are many meanings, even when each sacred syllable is darkest to be read,—better such creed than that of the atheist or skeptic, distracted ever in his seemingly sullen apathy, by the dim, dark doom of dust. Better that Fro should live, than that Newton should die—for ever. What though the benevolent Howard devoted his days to visit the dungeon’s gloom, and by intercession with princes, to set the prisoners free from the low damp-dripping stone roof of the deep-dug cell beneath the foundation rocks of the citadel, to the high dewdropping vault of heaven, too, too dazlingly illumined by the lamp of the insufferable sun! There reason triumphed—those were the works of glorified humanity. But thou—a creature of mere instinct—according to Descartes, a machine, an automaton—hadst yet a constant light of thought and of affection in thine eyes—nor wert thou without some glimmering and mysterious notions—and what

more have we ourselves!—of life and of death! Why fear to say that thou wert divinely commissioned and inspired—on that most dismal and shrieking hour, when little Harry Seymour, that bright English boy, “whom all that looked on loved,” entangled among the cruel chains of those fair water-lilies, all so innocently yet so murderously floating round him, was, by all standing or running about there with clenched hands, or kneeling on the sod—given up to inextricable death? We were not present to save the dear boy, who had been delivered to our care as to that of an elder brother, by the noble lady who, in her deep widow’s weeds, kissed her sole darling’s sunny head, and disappeared. We were not present—or by all that is holiest in heaven or on earth—our arms had been soon around thy neck, when thou wert seemingly about to perish!

But a poor, dumb, despised dog—nothing, as some say, but animated dust—was there—and without shout or signal—for all the Christian creatures were alike helpless in their despair—shot swift as a sunbeam over the deep, and by those golden tresses, sinking and brightening through the wave, brought the noble child ashore, and stood over him, as if in joy and sorrow, lying too like death on the sand! And when little Harry opened his glazed eyes, and looked bewildered on all the faces around—and then fainted, and revived and fainted again—till at last he came to dim recollection of this world on the bosom of the physician brought thither with incomprehensible speed from his dwelling afar off—thou didst lick his cold white hands and blue face, with a whine that struck awful pity into all hearts, and thou didst follow him—one of the group—as he was borne along—and frisking and gambolling no more all that day, gently didst thou lay thyself down at the feet of his little bed, and watch there unsleeping all night long! For the boy knew that God had employed one of his lowly creatures to save him—and beseeched that he might lie there to be looked at by the light of the taper, till he himself, as the pains went away, might fall asleep! And we, the watchers by his bed-side, heard him in his dreams mentioning the creature’s name in his prayers.

Yet at times—O Fro—thou wert a sad dog indeed—neither to bind nor to hold—for thy blood was soon set a-boil, and thou—like Julius Cæsar—and Demetrius Poliorcetes—and Alexander the Great—and many other ancient and modern kings and heroes—thou wert the slave of thy passions. No Scipio wert thou with a Spanish captive. Often—in spite of threatening eye and uplifted thong—uplifted only, for thou wert’st unflogged to thy grave—didst thou disappear for days at a time—as if lost or dead. Rumours of thee were brought to the kirk by shepherds from the remotest hills in the parish—most confused and contradictory—but, when collected and compared, all agreeing in this—that thou wert living, and life-like, and life-imparting, and after a season from thy travels to return; and return thou still didst—wearied often and wo-begone—purpled thy snow-white curling—and thy broad breast torn, not disfigured, by honourable wounds. For

never yet saw we a fighter like thee. Up on thy hind legs in a moment, like a growling Polar monster, with thy fore-paws round thy foeman's neck, bull-dog, colly, mastiff, or greyhound, and down with him in a moment, with as much ease as Cass, in the wrestling-ring at Carlisle, would throw a Bagman, and then woe to the throat of the downfallen, for thy jaws were shark-like as they opened and shut with their terrific tusks, grinding through skin and sinew to the spine.

Once, and once only—bullied out of all endurance by a half-drunken carrier—did we consent to let thee engage in a pitched battle with a mastiff victorious in fifty fights—a famous shanker—and a throttler beyond all compare. It was indeed a bloody business—now growling along the glawr of the road—a hairy hurricane—now snorting in the suffocating ditch—now fair play on the clean and clear crown of the causey—now rolling over and over through a chance-open white little gate, into a cottage-garden—now separated by choking them both with a chord—now brought out again with savage and fiery eyes to the scratch on a green plat round the sign-board-swinging tree in the middle of the village—auld women in their mutches crying out, “Shame! whare’s the minister?”—young women, with combs in their pretty heads, blinking with pale and almost weeping faces from low-lintelled doors—children crowding for sight and safety on the louping-on-stone—and loud cries ever and anon at each turn and eddy of the fight, of “Well done, Fro, well done, Fro—see how he worries his windpipe—well done, Fro!” for Fro was the delight and glory of the whole parish, and the honour of all its inhabitants, male and female, was felt to be staked on the issue—while at intervals was heard the harsh hoarse voice of the carriers and his compeers, cursing and swearing in triumph in a many-oathed language peculiar to the race that drive the broad-wheeled wagons with the high canvas roofs, as the might of Teeger prevailed, and the indomitable Fro seemed to be on his last legs beneath a grip of the jugular, and then stretched motionless and passive—in defeat or death. A mere *ruse* to recover wind. Like unshorn Samson starting from his sleep, and snapping like fired flax the vain bands of the Philistines, Fro whawmled Teeger off, and twisting round his head in spite of the grip on the jugular, the skin stretching and giving way in a ghastly but unfelt wound, he suddenly seized with all his tusks his antagonist’s eye, and bit it clean out of the socket. A yowl of unendurable pain—spouting of blood—sickness—swooning—tumbling over—and death. His last fight is over! His remaining eye glazed—his protruded tongue bitten in anguish by his own grinding teeth—his massy hind legs stretched out with a kick like a horse—his short tail stiffens—he is laid out a grim corpse—flung into a cart tied behind the wagon—and off to the tan-yard.

No shouts of victory—but stern, sullen, half-ashamed silence—as of guilty things after the perpetration of a misdeed. Still glaring savagely, ere yet the wrath of fight has subsided in his heart, and going and returning to

the bloody place, uncertain whether or not his enemy were about to return, Fro finally lies down at some distance, and with bloody flews keeps licking his bloody legs, and with long darting tongue cleansing the mire from his neck, breast, side, and back—a sanguinary spectacle! He seems almost insensible to our caresses, and there is something almost like upbraiding in his victorious eyes. Now that his veins are cooling, he begins to feel the pain of his wounds—many on, and close to vital parts. Most agonizing of all—all his four shanks are tusk-pierced, and, in less than ten minutes, he limps away to his kennel, lame as if riddled by shot—

“*Hec quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore!*”

gore-besmeared and dirt-draggled—an hour ago serenely bright as the lily in June, or the April snow. The huge wagon moves away out of the clachan without its master, who, ferocious from the death of the other brute he loved, dares the whole school to combat. Off fly a dozen jackets—and a devil’s dozen of striplings from twelve past to going sixteen—firmly wedged together like the Macedonian Phalanx—are yelling for the fray. There is such another shrieking of women as at the taking of Troy. But

“The Prince of Mearns stepped forth before the crowd,
And, Carter, challenged you to single fight!”

Bob Howie, who never yet feared the face of clay, and had too great a heart to suffer mere children to combat the strongest and most unhappy man in the whole country—stripped to the buff; and there he stands, with

“An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;”

shoulders like Atlas—breast like Hercules—and arms like Vulcan. The heart of Benjamin the wagoner dies within him—he accepts the challenge for a future day—and retreating backwards to his clothes, receives a right-hander as from a sledge-hammer on the temple, that fells him like an ox. The other carters all close in, but are sent spinning in all directions as from the sails of a windmill. Ever as each successive lout seeks the earth, we savage school-boys rush in upon him in twos, and threes, and fours, basting and battering him as he bawls; at this very crisis—so fate ordained—are seen hurrying down the hill from the south, leaving their wives, sweet-hearts, and asses in the rear, with coal-black hair and sparkling eyes, brown brawny legs, and clenched iron fists at the end of long arms, swinging flail-like at all times, and more than now, ready for the fray, a gang of Gipsies! while—beautiful coincidence!—up the hill from the north come on, at double-quick time, an awkward squad of as grim Milesians as ever buried a pike in a Protestant. Nor question nor reply; but in a moment a general *mêlée*. Men at work in the hay-fields, who would not leave their work for a dog-fight, fling down scythe and rake, and over hedges into the high-road, a stalwart reinforcement. Weavers leap from their treddles—do off their blue aprons, and out into the air. The red-cowled tailor pops his head through a skylight, and next moment is in the street. The butcher strips his long light-blue linen coat, to engage

a Paddy; and the smith, ready for action—for the huge arms of Burniwind are always bare—with a hand-over-hip delivery, makes the head of the king of the gipsies ring like an anvil. There has been no marshalling of forces—yet lo! as if formed in two regular lines by the Adjutant himself after the first tuilzie, stand the carters, the gipsies, and the Irishmen, opposed to Bob Howie, the butcher, the smith, the tailor, the weaver, the hay-makers, and the boys from the manse—the latter drawn up cautiously, but not cowardly, in the rear. What a twinkling of fists and shillelas! what bashed and bloody noses! cut blubber lips—cheekbones out of all proportion to the rest of the face, and, through sudden black and blue tumefactions, men's changed into pigs' eyes! And now there is also rugging of caps and mutches and hair, "femineo ululatu," for the Egyptian Amazons bear down like furies on the glee'd widow that keeps the change-house, half-witted Shoosy that sells yellow sand, and Davie Donald's dun daughter, commonly called Spunkie. What shrieking and tossing of arms, round the whole length and breadth of the village! Where is Simon Andrew the constable? Where is auld Robert Maxwell the ruling elder? What can have become of Laird Warnock, whose word is law? An what can the Minister be about, can anybody tell, that he does not come flying from the manse to save the lives of his parishioners from cannibals, and gipsies, and Eerish, murdering their way to the gallows?

How—why—or when—that bloody battle ceased to be, was never distinctly known either then or since; but, like every thing else, it had an end—and even now we have a confused dream of the spot at its termination—naked men lying on their backs in the mire, all drenched in blood—with women, some old and ugly, with shrivelled witch-like hag breasts, others young, and darkly, swarthy, blackly beautiful, with budding or new-blown bosoms unkerchiefed in the colley-shangy—perilous to see—leaning over them: and these were the Egyptians! Men in brown shirts, gore-spotted, with green bandages round their broken heads, laughing, and joking, and jeering, and singing, and shouting, though desperately mauled and mangled—while Scottish wives, and widows, and maids, could not help crying out in sympathy, "Oh! but they're bonnie men—what a pity they should aye be sae fond o' fechtin', and a' manner o' mischief!"—and these were the Irishmen! Retired and apart, hangs the weaver, with his head over a wall, dog-sick, and bocking in strong convulsions; some haymakers are washing their cut faces in the well: the butcher, bloody as a bit of his own beef, walks silent into the shambles; the smith, whose grimy face hides its pummelling, goes off grinning a ghastly smile in the hands of his scolding, yet not unloving wife; the tailor, gay as a flea, and hot as his own goose, to show how much more he has given than received, offers to leap any man on the ground, hop-step-and-jump, for a mutchkin—while Bob Howie walks about, without a visible wound, except the mark of bloody knuckles on his brawny breast, with arms a-kimbo, seaman fashion—for Bob had been at sea—and as soon as the

whisky comes, hands it about at his own expense, caulked after caulked, to the vanquished—for Bob was as generous as brave; had no spite at the gipsies; and as for Irishmen, why they were ranting, roving, red-hot, dare-devil boys, just like himself; and after the fight, he would have gone with them to Purgatory, or a few steps further down the hill. All the battle through, we manse-boys had fought, it may be said, behind the shadow of him our hero; and in warding off mischief from us, he received not a few heavy body-blows from King Carew, a descendant of Bamfylde Moore, and some crown-cracks from the shillelas of the Connaught Rangers.

Down comes a sudden thunder-plump, making the road a river—and to the whiff o' lightning, all in the shape of man, woman, and child, are under roof-cover. The afternoon soon clears up, and the haymakers leave the clanking empty gill or half-mutchkin stoup, for the field, to see what the rain has done—the forge begins again to roar—the sound of the flying shuttle tells us that the weaver is again on his treddles; the tailor hoists up his little window in the thatch, in that close confinement, to enjoy the caller air—the tinklers go to encamp on the common—"the air is balm"—insects, dropping from eave and tree, "show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold"—though the season of bird-singing be over and gone, there is a pleasant chirping hereabouts, thereabouts, everywhere; the old blind beggar, dog-led, goes from door to door, unconscious that such a stramash has ever been—and dancing round our champion, away we schoolboys all fly with him to swim in the Brother Loch, taking our fishing-rods with us, for one clap of thunder will not frighten the trouts; and about the middle or end of July, we have known great labbers, twenty inches long, play wallop between our very feet, in the warm shallow water, within a yard of the edge, to the yellow bodied, tinsey-tailed, black half-heckle, with brown mallard wing, a mere midge, but once fixed in lip or tongue, "inextricable as the gorged lion's bite."

But ever after that passage in the life of Fro, his were, on the whole, years of peace. Every season seemed to strengthen his sagacity, and to unfold his wonderful instincts. Most assuredly he knew all the simpler parts of speech—all the household words in the Scottish language. He was, in all our pastimes, as much one of ourselves, as if, instead of being a Pagan with four feet, he had been a Christian with two. As for temper, we trace the sweetness of our own to his; an angry word from one he loved, he forgot in half a minute, offering his lion-like paw; yet there were particular people he could not abide, nor from their hands would he have accepted a roasted potato out of the dripping pan, and in this he resembled his master. He knew the Sabbath-day as well as the Sexton—and never was known to bark till the Monday morning when the cock crew; and then he would give a long musical yowl, as if his breast were relieved from silence. If ever, in this cold, changeful, inconstant world, there was a friendship that might be called sincere, it was that which, half a century ago and

upwards, subsisted between Christopher North and John Fro. We never had a quarrel in all our lives—and within these two months we made a pilgrimage to his grave. He was buried—not by our hands, but by the hands of one whose tender and manly heart loved the old, blind, deaf, staggering creature to the very last—for such in his fourteenth year he truly was—a sad and sorry sight to see, to them who remembered the glory of his stately and majestic years. One day he crawled with a moan-like whine to our brother's feet, and expired. Reader, young, bright, and beautiful though thou be—remember all flesh is dust!

This is an episode—a tale in itself complete, yet growing out of, and appertaining to, the main plot of Epic or Article. You will recollect we were speaking of ducks, teals, and widgeons—and we come now to the next clause of the verse—wild geese and swans.

Some people's geese are all swans; but so far from that being the case with ours—sad and sorry are we to say it—now all our swans are geese. But in our buoyant boyhood, all God's creatures were to our eyes just as God made them; and there was ever—especially birds—a tinge of beauty over them all. What an inconceivable difference—distance—to the imagination, between the nature of a tame and a wild goose! Aloft in heaven, themselves in night invisible, the gabble of a cloud of wild geese is sublime. Whence comes it—whither goes it—for what end, and by what power impelled? Reason sees not into the darkness of instinct—and therefore the awe-struck heart of the night-wandering boy beats to hear the league-long gabble that probably has winged its wedge-like way from the lakes, and marshes, and dreary morasses of Siberia, from Lapland, or Iceland, or the unfrequented and unknown northern regions of America—regions set apart, quoth Bewick we believe, for summer residences and breeding places, and where they are amply provided with a variety of food, a large portion of which must consist of the larvæ of gnats, and myriads of insects, there fostered by the unsetting sun! Now they are all gabbling good Gaelic over a Highland night-moor. Perhaps in another hour the descending cloud will be covering the wide waters at the head of the wild Loch Maree—or, silent and asleep, the whole host be riding at anchor around Lomond's Isles!

But 'tis now mid-day—and lo! in that mediterranean—a flock of wild Swans! Have they dropt down from the ether into the water almost as pure as ether, without having once folded their wings, since they rose aloft to shun the insupportable northern snows hundreds of leagues beyond the storm-swept Orcades? To look at the quiet creatures, you might think that they had never left the circle of that little loch. There they hang on their shadows, even as if asleep in the sunshine; and now stretching out their long wings—how apt for flight from clime to clime!—joyously they beat the liquid radiance, till to the loud flapping high rises the mist, and wide spreads the foam, almost sufficient for a rainbow. Safe are they from all birds of prey. The Osprey dashes down on the teal, or sea-trout, swimming with-

in or below their shadow. The great Erne, or Sea-eagle, pounces on the mallard, as he mounts from the bulrushes before the wild swans sailing, with all wings hoisted, like a fleet—but osprey nor eagle dares to try his talons on that stately bird—for he is bold in his beauty, and formidable as he is fair; the pinions that swim and soar can also smite; and though the one be a lover of war, the other of peace, yet of them it may be said,

"The eagle he is lord above,
The swan is lord below!"

To have shot such a creature—so large—so white—so high-soaring—and on the winds of midnight wafted from so far—a creature that seemed not merely a stranger in that loch, but belonging to some mysterious land in another hemisphere, whose coast ships with frozen rigging have been known to visit, driving under bare poles through a month's snow storms—to have shot such a creature was an era in our imagination, from which, had nature been more prodigal, we might have sprung up a poet. Once, and but once, we were involved in the glory of that event. The creature had been in a dream of some river or lake in Kamschatka—or ideally listening,

"Across the waves' tumultuous roar,

The wolf's long howl from Onalashka's shore,"

when, guided by our good genius and our brightest star, we suddenly saw him sitting asleep in all his state, within gunshot, in a bay of the moonlight Loch! We had nearly fainted—died on the very spot—and why were we not entitled to have died as well as any other passionate spirit, whom joy ever divorced from life? We blew his black bill into pieces—not a feather on his head but was touched; and like a little white-sailed pleasure-boat caught in a whirlwind, the wild swan spun round, and then lay motionless on the water, as if all her masts had gone by the board. We were all alone that night—not even Fro was with us; we had reasons for being alone, for we wished not that there should be any foot-fall but our own round that mountain-hut. Could we swim? Ay, like the wild swan himself, through surge or breaker. But now the loch was still as the sky, and twenty strokes carried us close to the glorious creature, which, grasped by both hands, and supporting us as it was trailed beneath our breast, while we floated rather than swam ashore, we felt to be in verity our—Prey! We trembled with a sort of fear, to behold him lying indeed dead on the sward. The moon—the many stars, here and there one wondrously large and lustrous—the hushed glittering loch—the hills, though somewhat dimmed, green all winter through, with here and there a patch of snow on their summits in the blue sky, on which lay a few fleecy clouds—the mighty foreign bird, whose plumage we had never hoped to touch but in a dream, lying like the ghost of something that ought not to have been destroyed—the scene was altogether such as made our wild young heart quake, and almost repent of having killed a creature so surpassingly beautiful. But that was a fleeting fancy—and over the wide moors we went, like an American Indian laden with game, journeying to his

wigwam over the wilderness. As we whitened towards the village in the light of morning, the earlier labourers held up their hands in wonder what and who we might be; and Fro, who had missed his master, and was lying awake for him on the mount, came bounding along, nor could refrain the bark of delighted passion as his nose nuzzled in the soft down of the bosom of the creature whom he remembered to have sometimes seen floating too far off in the lake, or far above our reach cleaving the firmament.

FYTTE THIRD.

O MUCKLE-MOU'D Meg! and can it be that thou art numbered among forgotten things—unexistences!

"Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees!"

What would we not now give for a sight—a kiss—of thy dear lips! Lips which we remember once to have put to our own, even when thy beloved barrel was double-loaded! Now we sigh to think on what then made us shudder! Oh! that thy butt were but now resting on our shoulder! Alas! for ever discharged! Burst and rent asunder, art thou now lying buried in a peat-moss? Did some vulgar villain of a village Vulcan convert thee, name and nature, into nails? Some dark-visaged Douglas of a henroost-robbing Egyptian, solder thee into a pan? Oh! that our passion could dig down unto thee in the bowels of the earth—and with loud lamenting elegies, and louder hymns of gratulation, restore thee, buttless, lockless, vizyless, burst, rent, torn, and twisted though thou be'st, to the light of day, and of the world-rejoicing Sun! Then would we adorn thee with evergreen wreaths of the laurel and the ivy—and hang thee up, in memory and in monument of all the bright, dim, still, stormy days of our boyhood—when gloom itself was glory—and when—But

"Be hush'd my dark spirit! for wisdom condemns,
When the faint and the feeble deplore."

Cassandra—Corinna—Sappho—Lucretia—Cleopatra—Tighe—De Staël—in their beauty or in their genius, are, with millions on millions of the fair-faced or bright-souled, nothing but dust and ashes; and as they are, so shall Baillie, and Grant, and Hemans, and Landon be—and why vainly yearn "with love and longings infinite," to save from doom of perishable nature—of all created things, but one alone—Muckle-mou'd Meg!

After a storm comes a calm; and we hasten to give the sporting world the concluding account of our education. In the moorland parish—God bless it—in which we had the inestimable advantage of passing our boyhood—there were a good many falcons—of course the kite or glead—the buzzard—the sparrowhawk—the marsh harrier—that imp the merlin—and, rare bird and beautiful! there, on a cliff which, alas! a crutched man must climb no more, did the Peregrine build her nest. You must not wonder at this, for the parish was an extensive one even for Scotland—half Highland, half Lowland—and had not only "muirs and mosses many o," but numerous

hills, not a few mountains, some most extraordinary cliffs, considerable store of woods, and one, indeed, that might well be called The Forest.

Lift up thy rock-crowned forehead through thy own sweet stormy skies, Auld Scotland! and as sternly and grimly thou look'st far over the hushed or howling seas, remember thee—till all thy moors and mosses quake at thy heart, as if swallowing up an invading army—a fate that oft befell thy foes of yore—remember thee, in mist-shrouded dream, and cloud-born vision, of the long line of kings, and heroes, and sages, and bards, whose hal-lowed bones sleep in pine-darkened tombs among the mountain heather, by the side of rivers, and lochs, and arms of ocean—their spirits yet seen in lofty superstition, sailing or sitting on the swift or settled tempest. Lift up thy rock-crowned forehead, Auld Scotland! and sing aloud to all the nations of the earth, with thy voice of cliffs, and caves, and caverns,

"Wha daur meddle wi' me?"

What! some small, puny, piteous windpipes are heard cheeping against thee from the Cockneys—like ragged chickens agape in the pip. How the feeble and fearful creatures would crawl on their hands and knees, faint and giddy, and shrieking out for help to the heather stalks, if forced to face one of thy cliffs, and foot its flinty bosom! How would the depths of their long ears, cotton-stuffed in vain, ache to the spray-thunder of thy cataracts! Sick, sick would be their stomachs, storm-swept in a six-oared cutter into the jaws of Staffa! That sight is sufficient to set the most saturnine on the guffaw—the Barry Cornwall himself, crossing a chasm a hundred yards deep,

"On the uncertain footing of a spar,"

on a tree felled where it stood, centuries ago, by steel or storm, into a ledgeless bridge, oft sounding and shaking to the hunter's feet in chase of the red-deer! The Cockneys do not like us Scotchmen—because of our high cheekbones. They are sometimes very high indeed, very coarse, and very ugly, and give a Scotchman a grim and gaunt look, assuredly not to be sneezed at, with any hope of impunity, on a dark day and in a lonesome place, by the most heroic chief of the most heroic clan in all the level land of Lud, travelling all by himself in a horse and gig, and with a black boy in a cockaded glazed hat, through the Heelands o' Scotland, passing of course, at the very least, for a captain of Hussars! Then Scotchmen canna keep their backs straught, it seems, and are always booin' and booin' afore a great man. Cannot they, indeed? Do they, indeed? Ascend with that Scottish shepherd yon mountain's breast—swim with him that mountain loch—a bottle of Glenlivet, who first stands in shallow water, on the Oak Isle—and whose back will be straughtest, that of the Caledonian or the Cockney? The little Luddite will be puking among the heather, about some five hundred feet above the level of the sea—higher for the first time in his life than St. Paul's, and nearer than he will again be, either in the spirit or the flesh, to heaven. The little Luddite will be puking in the hitherto unpolluted loch,

after some seven strokes or so, with a strong Scottish weed twisted like an eel round its thigh, and shrieking out for the nearest resuscitating machine in a country, where, alas! there is no Humane Society. The back of the shepherd—even in presence of that “great man”—will be as straight as—do not tremble, Cockney—this Crutch. Conspicuous from afar like a cairn, from the inn-door at Arrochar, in an hour he will be turning up his little finger so—on the Cobbler’s head; or, in twenty minutes, gliding like a swan, or shooting like a salmon, his back being still straight—leaving Luss, he will be shaking the dewdrops from his brawny body on the silver sand of Inch Morren.

And happy were we, Christopher North, happy were we in the parish in which Fate delivered us up to Nature, that, under her tuition, our destinies might be fulfilled. A parish! Why it was in itself a kingdom—a world. Thirty miles long by twenty at the broadest, and five at the narrowest; and is not that a kingdom—is not that a world worthy of any monarch that ever wore a crown? Was it level? Yes, league-long levels were in it of greensward, hard as the sand of the sea-shore, yet springy and elastic, fit training ground for Childers, or Eclipse, or Hambletonian, or Smolensko, or for a charge of cavalry in some great pitched battle, while artillery might keep playing against artillery from innumerable affronting hills. Was it boggy? Yes, black bogs were there, which extorted a panegyric from the roving Irishman in his richest brogue—bogs in which forests had of old been buried, and armies with all their banners. Was it hilly? Ay, there the white sheep nibbled, and the black cattle grazed; there they baa’d and they lowed upon a thousand hills—a crowd of cones, all green as emerald. Was it mountainous? Give answer from afar, ye mist-shrouded summits, and ye clouds cloven by the eagle’s wing! But whether ye be indeed mountains, or whether ye be clouds, who can tell, bedazzled as are his eyes by that long-lingering sunset, that drenches heaven and earth in one indistinguishable glory, setting the West on fire, as if the final conflagration were begun! Was it woody? Hush, hush, and you will hear a pine-cone drop in the central silence of a forest—a silent and solitary wilderness—in which you may wander a whole day long, unaccompanied but by the cushat, the corby, the falcon, the roe, and they are all shy of human feet, and, like thoughts, pass away in a moment; so if you long for less fleeting farewells from the native dwellers in the wood, lo! the bright brown queen of the butterflies, gay and gaudy in her glancings through the solitude, the dragon-fly whirling bird-like over the pools in the glade; and if your ear desire music, the robin and the wren may haply trill you a few notes among the briery rocks, or the bold blackbird open wide his yellow bill in his holly-ree, and set the squirrels a-leaping all within reach of his ringing roundelay. Any rivers? one—to whom a thousand torrents are tributary—as he himself is tributary to the sea. Any lochs? How many we know not—for we never counted them twice alike—omitting perhaps some

forgotten tarns, or counting twice over some one of our more darling waters, worthy to dash their waves against the sides of ships—alone wanting to the magnificence of those inland seas! Yes—it was as level, as boggy, as hilly, as mountainous, as woody, as lochy, and as rivery a parish, as ever laughed to scorn Colonel Mudge and his Trigonometrical Survey.

Was not that a noble parish for apprenticeship in sports and pastimes of a great master? No need of any teacher. On the wings of joy we were borne over the bosom of nature, and learnt all things worthy and needful to be learned, by instinct first, and afterwards by reason. To look at a wild creature—winged with feathers, or mere feet—and not desire to destroy or capture it—is impossible to passion—to imagination—to fancy. Thus had we longed to feel and handle the glossy plumage of the beaked bird—the wide-winged Birds of Prey—before our finger had ever touched a trigger. Their various flight, in various weather, we had watched and noted with something even of the eye of a naturalist—the wonder of a poet; for among the brood of boys there are hundreds and thousands of poets who never see manhood,—the poetry dying away—the boy growing up into mere prose;—yet to some even of the paragraphs of these Three Fyttes do we appeal, that a few sparks of the sacred light are yet alive within us; and sad to our old ears would be the sound of “Put out the light, and then—put out the light!” Thus were we impelled, even when a mere child, far away from the manse, for miles, into the moors and woods. Once it was feared that poor wee Kit was lost; for having set off all by himself, at sunrise, to draw a night-line from the distant Black Loch, and look at a trap set for a glead, a mist overtook him on the moor on his homeward way, with an eel as long as himself hanging over his shoulder, and held him prisoner for many hours within its shifting walls, frail indeed, and opposing no resistance to the hand, yet impenetrable to the feet of fear as the stone dungeon’s thraldom. If the mist had remained, that would have been nothing; only a still cold wet seat on a stone; but as “a trot becomes a gallop soon, in spite of curb and rein,” so a Scotch mist becomes a shower—and a shower a flood—and a flood a storm—and a storm a tempest—and a tempest thunder and lightning—and thunder and lightning heaven-quake and earth-quake—till the heart of poor wee Kit quaked, and almost died within him in the desert. In this age of Confessions, need we be ashamed to own, in the face of the whole world, that we sat us down and cried! The small brown Moorland bird, as dry as a toast, hopped out of his heather-hole, and cheerfully cheeped comfort. With crest just a thought lowered by the rain, the green-backed, white-breasted peaseweep, walked close by us in the mist; and sight of wonder, that made even in that quandary by the quagmire our heart beat with joy—lo! never seen before, and seldom since, three wee peaseweeps, not three days old, little bigger than shrew-mice, all covered with blackish down, interspersed with long

white hair, running after their mother! But the large hazel eye of the she peaseweep, restless even in the most utter solitude, soon spied us glowering at her, and her young ones, through our tears; and not for a moment doubting—Heaven forgive her for the shrewd but cruel suspicion!—that we were Lord Eglington's gamekeeper—with a sudden shrill cry that thrilled to the marrow in our cold backbone—flapped and fluttered herself away into the mist, while the little black bits of down disappeared, like devils, into the moss. The croaking of the frogs grew terrible. And worse and worse, close at hand, seeking his lost cows through the mist, the bellow of the notorious red bull! We began saying our prayers; and just then the sun forced himself out into the open day, and, like the sudden opening of the shutters of a room, the whole world was filled with light. The frogs seemed to sink among the pow-heads—as for the red bull who had tossed the tinker, he was cantering away, with his tail towards us, to a lot of cows on the hill; and hark—a long, a loud, an oft-repeated halloo! Rab Roger, honest fellow, and Leezy Muir, honest lass, from the manse, in search of our dead body! Rab pulls our ears lightly, and Leezy kisses us from the one to the other—wrings the rain out of our long yellow hair—(a pretty contrast to the small gray sprig now on the crown of our pericranium, and the thin tail a-cock behind)—and by and by stepping into Hazel-Deanhead for a drap and a “chitterin’ piece,” by the time we reach the manse we are as dry as a whistle—take our scold and our pawmies from the minister—and, by way of punishment and penance, after a little hot whisky toddy, with brown sugar and a bit of bun, are bundled off to bed in the daytime!

Thus we grew up a Fowler, ere a loaded gun was in our hand—and often guided the city-fowler to the haunts of the curlew, the plover, the moorfowl, and the falcon. The falcon! yes—in the higher region of clouds and cliffs. For now we had shot up into a stripling—and how fast had we so shot up you may know, by taking notice of the school-boy on the play-green, and two years afterwards discovering, perhaps, that he is that fine tall ensign carrying the colours among the light-bobs of the regiment, to the sound of clarion and flute, cymbal and great drum, marching into the city a thousand strong.

We used in early boyhood, deceived by some uncertainty in size, not to distinguish between a kite and a buzzard, which was very stupid, and unlike us—more like Poietes in Salmonia. The flight of the buzzard, as may be seen in Selby, is slow—and except during the season of incubation, when it often soars to a considerable height, it seldom remains long on the wing. It is indeed a heavy, inactive bird, both in disposition, and appearance, and is generally seen perched upon some old and decayed tree, such being its favourite haunt. Him we soon thought little or nothing about—and the last one we shot, it was, we remember, just as he was coming out of the deserted nest of a crow, which he had taken possession of out of pure laziness; and we

killed him for not building a house of his own in a country where there was no want of sticks. But the kite or glead, as the same distinguished ornithologist rightly says, is proverbial for the ease and gracefulness of its flight, which generally consists of large and sweeping circles, performed with a motionless wing, or at least with a slight and almost imperceptible stroke of its pinions, and at very distant intervals. In this manner, and directing its course by its tail, which acts as a rudder, whose slightest motion produces effect, it frequently soars to such a height as to become almost invisible to the human eye. Him we loved to slay, as a bird worthy of our barrel. Him and her have we watched for days, like a lynx, till we were led, almost as if by an instinct, to their nest in the heart of the forest—a nest lined with wool, hair, and other soft materials, in the fork of some large tree. They will not, of course, utterly forsake their nest, when they have young, fire at them as you will, though they become more wary, and seem as if they heard a leaf fall, so suddenly will they start and soar to heaven. We remember, from an ambuscade in a briery dell in the forest, shooting one flying overhead to its nest; and, on going up to him as he lay on his back, with clenched talons and fierce eyes, absolutely shrieking and yelling with fear, and rage, and pain, we intended to spare his life, and only take him prisoner, when we beheld beside him on the sod, a chicken from the brood of famous ginger piles, then, all but his small self, following the feet of their clucking mother at the manse! With visage all inflamed, we gave him the butt on his double organ of destructiveness, then only known to us by the popular name of “back o’ the head,” exclaiming

“Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
Immolat!”—

Quivered every feather, from beak to tail and talon, in his last convulsion,

“Vitate cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras!”

In the season of love what combats have we been witness to—Umpire—between birds of prey! The Female Falcon, she sat aloof like a sultana, in her soft, sleek, glossy plumes, the iris in her eye of wilder, more piercing, fiery, cruel, fascinating, and maddening lustre, than ever lit the face of the haughtiest human queen, adored by princes on her throne of diamonds. And now her whole plumage shivers—and is ruffled—for her own Gentle Peregrine appears, and they two will enjoy their dalliance on the edge of the cliff-chasm—and the Bride shall become a wife in that stormy sunshine on the loftiest precipice of all these our Alps. But a sudden sigh sweeps down from heaven, and a rival Hawk comes rushing in his rage from his widowed eyry, and will win and wear this his second selected bride—for her sake, tearing, or to be torn, to pieces. Both struck down from heaven, fall a hundred fathom to the heather, talon-locked, in the mutual gripe of death. Fair play, gentlemen, and attend to the Umpire. It is, we understand, to be an up-and-down fight.* Allow us to disentangle you—and without giving advantage to

either—elbow-room to both. Neither of you ever saw a human face so near before—nor ever were captive in a human hand. Both fasten their momentarily frightened eyes on us, and, holding back their heads, emit a wild ringing cry. But now they catch sight of each other, and in an instant are one bunch of torn, bloody plumes. Perhaps their wings are broken, and they can soar no more—so up we fling them both into the air—and wheeling each within a short circle, clash again go both birds together, and the talons keep tearing throats till they die. Let them die, then, for both are for ever disabled to enjoy their lady-love. She, like some peerless flower in the days of chivalry at a fatal tournament, seeing her rival lovers dying for her sake, nor ever to wear her glove or scarf in the front of battle, rising to leave her canopy in tears of grief and pride—even like such Angelica, the Falcon unfolds her wings, and flies slowly away from her dying ravishers, to bewail her virginity on the mountains. “O Frailty! thy name is woman!” A third Lover is already on the wing, more fortunate than his preceding peers—and Angelica is won, woo’d, and sitting, about to lay an egg in an old eyry, soon repaired and furnished up for the honeymoon, with a number of small birds lying on the edge of the hymeneal couch, with which, when wearied with love, and yawp with hunger, Angelica may cram her maw, till she be ready to burst, by her bridegroom’s breast.

Forgotten all human dwellings, and all the thoughts and feelings that abide by firesides, and doorways, and rooms, and roofs—delightful was it, during the long, long midsummer holiday, to lie all alone, on the green-sward of some moor-surrounded mount, not far from the foot of some range of cliffs, and with our face up to the sky, wait, unwearying, till a speck was seen to cross the blue cloudless lift, and steadying itself after a minute’s quivering into motionless rest, as if hung suspended there by the counteracting attraction of heaven and earth, known to be a Falcon! Balanced far above its prey, and, soon as the right moment came, ready to pounce down, and fly away with the treasure in its talons to its crying eyry! If no such speck were for hours visible in the ether, doubtless dream upon dream, rising unbidden, and all of their own wild accord, congenial with the wilderness, did, like phantasmagoria, pass to and fro, backwards and forwards, along the darkened curtain of our imagination, all the lights of reason being extinguished or removed! In that trance, not unheard, although scarcely noticed, was the cry of the curlew, the murmur of the little moorland burn, or the din, almost like dashing, of the far-off loch. ’Twas thus that the senses, in their most languid state, ministered to the fancy, and fed her for a future day, when all the imagery then received so imperfectly, and in broken fragments, into her mysterious keeping, was to arise in orderly array, and to form a world more lovely and more romantic even than the reality, which then lay hushed or whispering, glittering or gloomy, in the outward air. For the senses hear and see all things in their seeming slum-

bers, from all the impulses that come to them in solitude gaining more, far more than they have lost! When we are awake, or half awake, or almost sunk into a sleep, they are ceaselessly gathering materials for the thinking and feeling soul—and it is hers, in a deep delight formed of memory and imagination, to put them together by a divine plastic power, in which she is almost, as it were, a very creator, till she exult to look on beauty and on grandeur such as this earth and these heavens never saw, products of her own immortal and immaterial energies, and *BEING* once, to *BE* for ever, when the universe, with all its suns and systems, is no more!

But oftener we and our shadows glided along the gloom at the foot of the cliffs, ear-led by the incessant cry of the young hawks in their nest, ever hungry except when asleep. Left to themselves, when the old birds are hunting, an hour’s want of food is felt to be famine, and you hear the cry of the callow creatures, angry with one another, and it may be, fighting with soft beak and pointless claws, till a living lump of down tumbles over the rock-ledge, soon to be picked to the bone by insects, who likewise all live upon prey; for example, Ants of carrion. Get you behind that briery bield, that wild-rose hanging rock, far and wide scenting the wilderness with a faint perfume; or into that cell, almost a parlour, with a Gothic roof formed by large stones leaning one against the other and so arrested, as they tumbled from the frost-riven breast of the precipice. Wait there, though it should be for hours—but it will not be for hours; for both the old hawks are circling the sky, one over the marsh and one over the wood. She comes—she comes—the female Sparrowhawk, twice the size of her mate; and while he is plain in his dress, as a cunning and cruel Quaker, she is gay and gaudy as a Demirep dressed for the pit of the Opera—deep and broad her bosom, with an air of luxury in her eyes that glitter like a serpent’s. But now she is a mother, and plays a mother’s part—greedier, even than for herself, for her greedy young. The lightning flashes from the cave-mouth, and she comes tumbling, and dashing, and rattling through the dwarf bushes on the cliff-face, perpendicular and plumb-down, within three yards of her murderer. Her husband will not visit his nest this day—no—nor all night long; for a father’s is not as a mother’s love. Your only chance of killing him, too, is to take a lynx-eyed circuit round about all the moors within half a league; and possibly you may see him sitting on some cairn, or stone, or tree-stump, afraid to fly either hither or thither, perplexed by the sudden death he saw appearing among the unaccountable smoke, scenting it yet with his fine nostrils, so as to be unwary of your approach. Hazard a long shot—for you are right behind him—and a slug may hit him on the head, and, following the feathers, split his skull-cap and scatter his brains. ’Tis done—and the eyry is orphan’d. Let the small brown moorland birds twitter Io Pean, as they hang balanced on the bulrushes—let the stone-chat glance less fearfully within shelter of the old gray cairn—let the cushat coo his joyous grati

tude in the wood—and the lark soar up to heaven, afraid no more of a demon descending from the cloud. As for the imps in the eyry, let them die of rage and hunger—for there must always be pain in the world; and 'tis well when its endurance by the savage is the cause of pleasure to the sweet—when the gore-yearning cry of the cruel is drowned in the song of the kind at feed or play—and the tribes of the peace-loving rejoice in the despair and death of the robbers and shedders of blood!

Not one fowler of fifty thousand has in all his days shot an Eagle. That royal race seems nearly extinct in Scotland. Gaze as you will over the wide circumference of a Highland heaven, calm as the bride's dream of love, or disturbed as the shipwrecked sailor's vision of a storm, and all spring and summer long you may not chance to see the shadow of an Eagle in the sun. The old kings of the air are sometimes yet seen by the shepherds on cliff or beneath cloud; but their offspring are rarely allowed to get full fledged in spite of the rifle always lying loaded in the shieling. But in the days of our boyhood there were many glorious things on earth and air that now no more seem to exist, and among these were the Eagles. One pair had from time immemorial built on the Echo-cliff, and you could see with a telescope the eyry, with the rim of its circumference, six feet in diameter, strewn with partridges, moorfowl, and leverets—their feathers and their skeletons. But the Echo-cliff was inaccessible.

"Hither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
And mists that spread the flying shroud,
And sunbeams, and the flying blast,
That if it could, would hurry past,
But that enormous barrier binds it fast."

No human eye ever saw the birds within a thousand feet of the lower earth; yet how often must they have stooped down on lamb and leveret, and struck the cushat in her very yew-tree in the centre of the wood! Perhaps they preyed at midnight, by the light of the waning moon—at mid-day, in the night of sun-hiding tempests—or afar off, in even more solitary wilds, carried thither on the whirlwind of their own wings, they swept off their prey from uninhabited isles,

"Placed far amid the melancholy main,"

or vast inland glens, where not a summer shieling smiles beneath the region of eternal snows. But eagles are subject to diseases in flesh, and bone, and blood, just like the veriest poultry that die of croup and consumption on the dunghill before the byre-door. Sickness blinds the eye that God framed to pierce the seas, and weakens the wing that dallies with the tempest. Then the eagle feels how vain is the doctrine of the divine right of kings. He is hawked at by the mousing owl, whose instinct instructs him that these talons have lost their grasp, and these pinions their death-blow. The eagle lies for weeks famished in his eyry, and hunger-driven over the ledge, leaves it to ascend no more. He is dethroned, and wasted to mere bones—a bunch of feathers—his flight is now slower than that of the buzzard—he floats himself along now with

difficulty from knoll to knoll, pursued by the shrieking magpies, buffeted by the corby, and lying on his back, like a recreant, before the beak of the raven, who, a month ago, was terrified to hop-round the carcass till the king of the air was satiated, and gave his permission to croaking Sooty to dig into the bowels he himself had scorned. Yet he is a noble aim to the fowler still; you break a wing and a leg, but fear to touch him with your hand; Fro feels the iron-clutch of his talons constricted in the death-pang; and holding him up, you wonder that such an anatomy—for his weight is not more than three pounds—could drive his claws through that shaggy hide till blood sprung to the blow—inextricable but to yells of pain, and leaving gashes hard to heal, for virulent is the poison of rage in a dying bird of prey.

Sublime solitude of our boyhood! where each stone in the desert was sublime, unassociated though it was with dreams of memory, in its own simple native power over the human heart! Each sudden breath of wind passed by us like the voice of a spirit. There were strange meanings in the clouds—often so like human forms and faces threatening us off, or beckoning us on, with long black arms, back into the long-withdrawing wilderness of heaven. We wished then, with quaking bosoms, that we had not been all alone in the desert—that there had been another heart, whose beatings might have kept time with our own, that we might have gathered courage in the silent and sullen gloom from the light in a brother's eye—the smile on a brother's countenance. And often had we such a friend in these our far-off wanderings over moors and mountains, by the edge of lochs, and through the umbrage of the old pinewoods. A friend from whom "we had received his heart, and given him back our own,"—such a friendship as the most fortunate and the most happy—and at that time we were both—are sometimes permitted by Providence, with all the passionate devotion of young and untamed imagination, to enjoy, during a bright dreamy world of which that friendship is as the Polar star. Emilius Godfrey! for ever holy be the name! a boy when we were but a child—when we were but a youth, a man. We felt stronger in the shadow of his arm—happier, bolder, better in the light of his countenance. He was the protector—the guardian of our moral being. In our pastimes we bounded with wilder glee—at our studies we sat with intenser earnestness, by his side. He it was that taught us how to feel all those glorious sunsets, and embued our young spirit with the love and worship of nature. He it was that taught us to feel that our evening prayer was no idle ceremony to be hastily gone through—that we might lay down our head on the pillow, then soon smoothed in sleep, but a command of God, which a response from nature summoned the humble heart to obey. He it was who for ever had at command wit for the sportive, wisdom for the serious hour. Fun and frolic flowed in the merry music of his lips—they lightened from the gay glancing of his eyes—and then, all at once, when the one changed its measures, and the

other gathered, as it were, a mist or a cloud, an answering sympathy chained our own tongue, and darkened our own countenance, in intercommunion of spirit felt to be indeed divine! It seemed as if we knew but the words of language—that he was a scholar who saw into their very essence. The books we read together were, every page, and every sentence of every page, all covered over with light. Where his eye fell not as we read, all was dim or dark, unintelligible or with imperfect meanings. Whether we perused with him a volume writ by a nature like our own, or the volume of the earth and the sky, or the volume revealed from Heaven, next day we always knew and felt that something had been added to our being. Thus imperceptibly we grew up in our intellectual stature, breathing a purer moral and religious air, with all our finer affections towards other human beings, all our kindred and our kind, touched with a dearer domestic tenderness, or with a sweet benevolence that seemed to our ardent fancy to embrace the dwellers in the uttermost regions of the earth. No secret of pleasure or pain—of joy or grief—of fear or hope—had our heart to withhold or conceal from Emilius Godfrey. He saw it as it beat within our bosom, with all its imperfections—may we venture to say, with all its virtues. A repented folly—a confessed fault—a sin for which we were truly contrite—a vice flung from us with loathing and with shame—in such moods as these, happier were we to see his serious and his solemn smile, than when in mirth and merriment we sat by his side in the social hour on a knoll in the open sunshine, and the whole school were in ecstasies to hear tales and stories from his genius, even like a flock of birds chirping in their joy all newly-alighted in a vernal land. In spite of that difference in our years—or oh! say rather because that very difference did touch the one heart with tenderness and the other with reverence, how often did we two wander, like elder and younger brother, in the sunlight and the moonlight solitudes! Woods—into whose inmost recesses we should have quaked alone to penetrate, in his company were glad as gardens, through their most awful umbrage; and there was beauty in the shadows of the old oaks. Cataracts—in whose lonesome thunder, as it pealed into those pitchy pools, we durst not by ourselves have faced the spray—in his presence, din’d with a merry music in the desert, and cheerful was the thin mist they cast sparkling up into the air. Too severe for our unaccompanied spirit, then easily overcome with awe, was the solitude of those remote inland lochs. But as we walked with him along the winding shores, how passing sweet the calm of both blue depths—how magnificent the white-crested waves tumbling beneath the black thunder-cloud! More beautiful, because our eyes gazed on it along with his, at the beginning or the ending of some sudden storm, the Apparition of the Rainbow! Grandeur in its wildness, that seemed to sweep at once all the swinging and stooping woods, to our ear, because his too listened, the concerto by winds and waves played at midnight, when not one star was in

the sky. With him we first followed the Falcon in her flight—he showed us on the Echo-cliff the Eagle’s eyry. To the thicket he led us where lay couched the lovely-spotted Doe, or showed us the mild-eyed creature browsing on the glade with her two fawns at her side. But for him we should not then have seen the antlers of the red-deer, for the Forest was indeed a most savage place, and haunted—such was the superstition at which they who scorned it trembled—haunted by the ghost of a huntsman whom a jealous rival had murdered as he stooped, after the chase, at a little mountain well that ever since oozed out blood. What converse passed between us two in all those still shadowy solitudes! Into what depths of human nature did he teach our wondering eyes to look down! Oh! what was to become of us, we sometimes thought in sadness that all at once made our spirits sink—like a lark falling suddenly to earth, struck by the fear of some unwonted shadow from above—what was to become of us when the mandate should arrive for him to leave the Manse for ever, and sail away in a ship to India never more to return! Ever as that dreaded day drew nearer, more frequent was the haze in our eyes; and in our blindness, we knew not that such tears ought to have been far more rueful still, for that he then lay under orders for a longer and more lamentable voyage—a voyage over a narrow strait to the eternal shore. All—all at once he drooped; on one fatal morning the dread decay began—with no forewarning, the springs on which his being had so lightly—so proudly—so grandly moved, gave way. Between one Sabbath and another his bright eyes darkened—and while all the people were assembled at the sacrament, the soul of Emilius Godfrey soared up to Heaven. It was indeed a dreadful death, serene and sainted though it were—and not a hall—not a house—not a hut—not a shieling within all the circle of those wide mountains, that did not on that night mourn as if it had lost a son. All the vast parish attended his funeral—Lowlanders and Highlanders in their own garb of grief. And have time and tempest now blackened the white marble of that monument—is that inscription now hard to be read—the name of Emilius Godfrey in green obliteration—nor haply one surviving who ever saw the light of the countenance of him there interred! Forgotten as if he had never been! for few were that glorious orphan’s kindred—and they lived in a foreign land—forgotten but by one heart, faithful through all the chances and changes of this restless world! And therein enshrined among all its holiest remembrances, shall be the image of Emilius Godfrey, till it too, like his, shall be but dust and ashes!

Oh! blame not boys for so soon forgetting one another—in absence or in death. Yet forgetting is not just the very word; call it rather a reconciliation to doom and destiny—in thus obeying a benign law of nature that soon streams sunshine over the shadows of the grave. Not otherwise could all the ongoings of this world be continued. The nascent spirit outgrows much in which it once found all delight; and thoughts delightful still, thoughts

of the faces and the voices of the dead, perish not, lying sometimes in slumber—sometimes in sleep. It belongs not to the blessed season and genius of youth, to hug to its heart useless and unavailing griefs. Images of the well-beloved, when they themselves are in the mould, come and go, no unfrequent visitants, through the meditative hush of solitude. But our main business—our prime joys and our prime sorrows—ought to be—must be with the living. Duty demands it; and Love, who would pine to death over the bones of the dead, soon fastens upon other objects with eyes and voices to smile and whisper an answer to all his vows. So was it with us. Ere the mid-summer sun had withered the flowers that spring had sprinkled over our Godfrey's grave, youth vindicated its own right to happiness; and we felt that we did wrong to visit too often that corner in the kirkyard. No fears had we of any too oblivious tendencies; in our dreams we saw him—most often all alive as ever—sometimes a phantom away from that grave! If the morning light was frequently hard to be endured, bursting suddenly upon us along with the feeling that he was dead, it more frequently cheered and gladdened us with resignation, and sent us forth a fit playmate to the dawn that rang with all sounds of joy. Again we found ourselves angling down the river, or along the loch—once more following the flight of the Falcon along the woods—eying the Eagle on the Echo-Cliff. Days passed by, without so much as one thought of Emilius Godfrey—pursuing our pastime with all our passion, reading our books intently—just as if he had never been! But often and often, too, we thought we saw his figure coming down the hill straight towards us—his very figure—we could not be deceived—but the love-raised ghost disappeared on a sudden—the grief-woven spectre melted into the mist. The strength, that formerly had come from his counsels, now began to grow up of itself within our own unassisted being. The world of nature became more our own, moulded and modified by all our own feelings and fancies; and with a bolder and more original eye we saw the smoke from the sprinkled cottages, and read the faces of the mountaineers on their way to their work, or coming and going to the house of God.

Then this was to be our last year in the parish—now dear to us as our birth-place; nay, itself our very birth-place—for in it from the darkness of infancy had our soul been born. Once gone and away from the region of cloud and mountain, we felt that most probably never more should we return. For others, who thought they knew us better than we did ourselves, had chalked out a future life for young Christopher North—a life that was sure to lead to honour, and riches, and a splendid name. Therefore we determined with a strong, resolute, insatiate spirit of passion, to make the most—the best—of the few months that remained to us, of that our wild, free, and romantic existence, as yet untrammelled by those inexorable laws, which, once launched into the world, all alike—young and old—must obey. Our books were flung aside—

nor did our old master and minister frown—for he grudged not to the boy he loved the remnant of the dream about to be rolled away like the dawn's rosy clouds. We demanded with our eye—not with our voice—one long holyday, throughout that our last autumn, on to the pale farewell blossoms of the Christmas rose. With our rod we went earlier to the loch or river; but we had not known thoroughly our own soul—for now we angled less passionately—less perseveringly than was our wont of yore—sitting in a pensive—a melancholy—a miserable dream, by the dashing waterfall or the murmuring wave. With our gun we plunged earlier in the morning into the forest, and we returned later at eve—but less earnest—less eager were we to hear the cushat's moan from his yew-tree—to see the hawk's shadow on the glade, as he hung aloft on the sky. A thousand dead thoughts came to life again in the gloom of the woods—and we sometimes did wring our hands in an agony of grief, to know that our eyes should not behold the birch-tree brightening there with another spring.

Then every visit we paid to cottage or to shieling was felt to be a farewell; there was something mournful in the smiles on the sweet faces of the ruddy rustics, with their silken snoods, to whom we used to whisper harmless love-meanings, in which there was no evil guile; we regarded the solemn toil-and-care-worn countenances of the old with a profounder emotion than had ever touched our hearts in the hour of our more thoughtless joy; and the whole life of those dwellers among the woods, and the moors, and the mountains, seemed to us far more affecting now that we saw deeper into it, in the light of a melancholy sprung from the conviction that the time was close at hand when we should mingle with it no more. The thoughts that possessed our most secret bosom failed not by the least observant to be discovered in our open eyes. They who had liked us before, now loved us; our faults, our follies, the insolencies of our reckless boyhood, were all forgotten; whatever had been our sins, pride towards the poor was never among the number; we had shunned not stooping our head beneath the humblest lintel; our mite had been given to the widow who had lost her own; quarrelsome with the young we might sometimes have been, for boyblood is soon heated, and boils before a defying eye; but in one thing at least we were Spartans, we revered the head of old age.

And many at least were the kind—some the sad farewells, ere long whispered by us at gloaming among the glens. Let them rest for ever silent amidst that music in the memory which is felt, not heard—its blessing mute though breathing, like an inarticulate prayer! But to Thee—O palest Phantom—clothed in white raiment, not like unto a ghost risen with its grave-clothes to appeal, but like a seraph descending from the skies to bless—unto Thee will we dare to speak, as through the mist of years back comes thy yet unfaded beauty, charming us, while we cannot choose but weep with the selfsame vision that often glided before us long ago in the wilderness, and at the sound

of our voice would pause for a little while, and then pass by, like a white bird from the sea, floating unscared close by the shepherd's head, or alighting to trim its plumes on a knoll far up an inland glen! Death seems not to have touched that face, pale though it be—lifelike is the waving of those gentle hands—and the soft, sweet, low music which now we hear, steals not sure from lips hushed by the burial mould! Restored by the power of love, she stands before us as she stood of yore. Not one of all the hairs of her golden head was singed by the lightning that shivered the tree under which the child had run for shelter from the flashing sky. But in a moment the blue light in her dewy eyes was dimmed—and never again did she behold either flower or star. Yet all the images of all the things she had loved remained in her memory, clear and distinct as the things themselves before unextinguished eyes—and ere three summers had flown over her head, which, like the blossom of some fair perennial flower, in heaven's gracious dew and sunshine each season lifted its loveliness higher and higher in the light—she could trip her singing way through the wide wilderness, all by her joyful self, led, as all believed, nor erred they in so believing, by an angel's hand! When the primroses peeped through the reviving grass upon the vernal braes, they seemed to give themselves into her fingers; and 'twas thought they hung longer unfaded round her neck or forehead than if they had been left to drink the dew on their native bed. The linnets ceased not their lays, though her garment touched the broom-stalk on which they sang. The cushat, as she thrud her way through the wood, continued to croon in her darksome tree—and the lark, although just dropped from the cloud, was cheered by her presence into a new passion of song, and mounted over her head, as if it were his first matin hymn. All the creatures of the earth and air manifestly loved the Wanderer of the Wilderness—and as for human beings, she was named, in their pity, their wonder, and their delight, the Blind Beauty of the Moor!

She was an only child, and her mother had died in giving her birth. And now her father, stricken by one of the many cruel diseases that shorten the lives of shepherds on the hills, was bed-ridden—and he was poor. Of all words ever syllabled by human lips, the most blessed is—Charity. No manna now in the wilderness is rained from heaven—for the mouths of the hungry need it not in this our Christian land. A few goats feeding among the rocks gave them milk, and there was bread for them in each neighbour's house—neighbour though miles afar—as the sacred duty came round—and the unrepining poor sent the grateful child away with their prayers.

One evening, returning to the hut with her usual song, she danced up to her father's face on his rushy bed, and it was cold in death. If she shrieked—if she fainted—there was but one Ear that heard, one Eye that saw her in her swoon. Not now floating light like a small moving cloud unwilling to leave the flowery braes, though it be to melt in heaven, but driven along like a shroud of flying mist

before the tempest, she came upon us in the midst of that dreary moss; and at the sound of our voice, fell down with clasped hands at our feet—"My father's dead!" Had the hut put already on the strange, dim, desolate look of mortality? For people came walking fast down the braes, and in a little while there was a group round us, and we bore her back again to her dwelling in our arms. As for us, we had been on our way to bid the fair creature and her father farewell. How could she have lived—an utter orphan—in such a world! The holy power that is in Innocence would for ever have remained with her; but Innocence longs to be away when her sister Joy has departed; and it is sorrowful to see the one on earth, when the other has gone to Heaven! This sorrow none of us had long to see; for though a flower, when withered at the root, and doomed ere eve to perish, may yet look to the careless eye the same as when it blossomed in its pride—yet its leaves, still green, are not as once they were—its bloom, though fair, is faded—and at set of sun, the dews shall find it in decay, and fall unfelt on its petals. Ere Sabbath came, the orphan child was dead. Methinks we see now her little funeral. Her birth had been the humblest of the humble; and though all in life had loved her, it was thought best that none should be asked to the funeral of her and her father but two or three friends; the old clergyman himself walked at the head of the father's coffin—we at the head of the daughter's—for this was granted unto our exceeding love;—and thus passed away for ever the Blind Beauty of the Moor!

Yet sometimes to a more desperate passion than had ever before driven us over the wilds, did we deliver up ourselves entire, and pursue our pastime like one doomed to be a wild huntsman under some spell of magic. Let us, ere we go away from these high haunts and be no more seen—let us away far up the Great Glen, beyond the Echo-Cliff, and with our rifle—'twas once the rifle of Emilius Godfrey—let us stalk the red-deer. In that chase or forest the antlers lay not thick as now they lie on the Athole Braes; they were still a rare sight—and often and often had Godfrey and we gone up and down the Glen, without a single glimpse of buck or doe rising up from among the heather. But as the true angler will try every cast on the river, miles up and down, if he has reason to know that but one single fish has run up from the sea—so we, a true hunter, neither grudged nor wearied to stand for hours, still as the heron by the stream, hardly in hope, but satisfied with the possibility, that a deer might pass by us in the desert. Steadiest and strongest is self-fed passion springing in spite of circumstance. When blows the warm showery south-west wind, the trouts turn up their yellow sides at every dropping of the fly upon the curling water—and the angler is soon sated with the perpetual play. But once—twice—thrice—during a long blustering day—the sullen plunge of a salmon is sufficient for that day's joy. Still, therefore, still as a cairn that stands for ever on the hill, or rather as the shadow on a dial, that though it moves is never seen to move, day after day were we on our station in

the Great Glen. A loud, wild, wrathful, and savage cry from some huge animal, made our heart leap to our mouth, and bathed our forehead in sweat. We looked up—and a red-deer—a stag of ten—the king of the forest—stood with all his antlers, snuffing the wind, but yet blind to our figure overshadowed by a rock. The rifle-ball pierced his heart—and leaping up far higher than our head, he tumbled in terrific death, and lay stone-still before our starting eyes amid the rustling of the strong-bented heather! There we stood surveying him for a long triumphing hour. Ghastly were his glazed eyes—and ghastlier his long bloody tongue, bitten through at the very root in agony. The branches of his antlers pierced the sward like swords. His bulk seemed mightier in death even than when it was crowned with that kingly head, snuffing the north wind. In other two hours we were down at Moor-edge and up again, with an eager train, to the head of the Great Glen, coming and going a distance of a dozen long miles. A hay-wagon forced its way through the bogs and over the braes—and on our return into the inhabited country, we were met by shoals of peasants, men, women, and children, huzzaing over the Prey; for not for many years—never since the funeral of the old lord—had the antlers of a red-deer been seen by them trailing along the heather.

Fifty years and more—and oh! my weary soul! half a century took a long long time to die away, in gloom and in glory, in pain and pleasure, in storms through which were afraid to fly even the spirit's most eagle-winged raptures, in calms that rocked all her feelings like azure-plumed halcyons to rest—though now to look back upon it, what seems it all but a transitory dream of toil and trouble, of which the smiles, the sighs, the tears, the groans, were all alike vain as the forgotten sunbeams and the clouds! Fifty years and more are gone—and this is the Twelfth of August, Eighteen hundred and twenty-eight; and all the Highland mountains have since dawn been astir, and thundering to the impetuous sportsmen's joys! Our spirit burns within us, but our limbs are palsied, and our feet must brush the heather no more. Lo! how beautifully these fast-travelling pointers do their work on that black mountain's breast! intersecting it into parallelograms, and squares, and circles, and now all astoop on a sudden, as if frozen to death! Higher up among the rocks, and cliffs, and stones, we see a stripling, whose ambition it is to strike the sky with his forehead, and

wet his hair in the misty cloud, pursuing the ptarmigan, now in their variegated summer-dress, seen even among the unmelted snows. The scene shifts—and high up on the heath above the Linn of Dee, in the Forest of Braemar, the Thane—God bless him—has stalked the red-deer to his lair, and now lays his unerring rifle at rest on the stump of the Witch's Oak. Never shall Eld deaden our sympathies with the pastimes of our fellow men any more than with their highest raptures, their profoundest grief. Blessings on the head of every true sportsman on flood, or field, or fell; nor shall we take it at all amiss should any one of them, in return for the pleasure he may have enjoyed from these our Fyttes, perused in smoky cabin during a rainy day, to the peat-reek flavour of the glorious Glenlivet, send us, by the Inverness coach, Aberdeen steam-packet, or any other rapid conveyance, a basket of game, red, black, or brown, or peradventure a haunch of the red-deer.

Reader! be thou a male, bold as the Tercel Gentle—or a female, fair as the Falcon—a male, stern as an old Stag—or a female, soft as a young Doe—we entreat thee to think kindly of Us and of our Article—and to look in love or in friendship on Christopher in his Sporting Jacket, now come to the close of his Three Fyttes, into which he had fallen—out of one into another—and from which he has now been revived by the application of a little salt to his mouth, and then a caulker. Nor think that, rambling as we have been, somewhat after the style of thinking common in sleep, there has been no method in our madness, no *lucidus ordo* in our dream. All the pages are instinct with one spirit—our thoughts and our feelings have all followed one another, according to the most approved principles of association—and a fine proportion has been unconsciously preserved. The article may be likened to some noble tree, which—although here and there a branch have somewhat overgrown its brother above or below it, an arm stretched itself out into further gloom on this side than on that, so that there are irregularities in the umbrage—is still disfigured not by those sports and freaks of nature working on a great scale, and stands, magnificent object! equal to an old castle, on the cliff above the cataract. Wo and shame to the sacrilegious hand that would lop away one budding bough! Undisturbed let the tame and wild creatures of the region, in storm or sunshine, find shelter or shade under the calm circumference of its green old age.

TALE OF EXPIATION.

MARGARET BURNSIDE was an orphan. Her parents, who had been the poorest people in the parish, had died when she was a mere child; and as they had left no near relatives, there were few or none to care much about the desolate creature, who might be well said to have been left friendless in the world. True that the feeling of charity is seldom wholly wanting in any heart; but it is generally but a cold feeling among hard-working folk, towards objects out of the narrow circle of their own family affections, and selfishness has a ready and strong excuse in necessity. There seems, indeed, to be a sort of chance in the lot of the orphan offspring of paupers. On some the eye of Christian benevolence falls at the very first moment of their uttermost destitution—and their worst sorrows, instead of beginning, terminate with the tears shed over their parents' graves. They are taken by the hands, as soon as their hands have been stretched out for protection, and admitted as inmates into households, whose doors, had their fathers and mothers been alive, they would never have darkened. The light of comfort falls upon them during the gloom of grief, and attends them all their days. Others, again, are overlooked at the first fall of affliction, as if by some unaccountable fatality; the wretchedness with which all have become familiar, no one very tenderly pities; and thus the orphan, reconciling herself to the extreme hardships of her condition, lives on uncheered by those sympathies out of which grow both happiness and virtue, and yielding by degrees to the constant pressure of her lot, becomes poor in spirit as in estate, and either vegetates like an almost worthless weed that is carelessly trodden on by every foot, or if by nature born a flower, in time loses her lustre, and all her days leads the life not so much of a servant as of a slave.

Such, till she was twelve years old, had been the fate of Margaret Burnside. Of a slender form and weak constitution, she had never been able for much work; and thus from one discontented and harsh master and mistress to another, she had been transferred from house to house—always the poorest—till she came to be looked on as an encumbrance rather than a help in any family, and thought hardly worth her bread. Sad and sickly she sat on the braes herding the kine. It was supposed that she was in a consumption—and as the shadow of death seemed to lie on the neglected creature's face, a feeling something like love was awakened towards her in the heart of pity, for which she showed her gratitude by still attending to all household tasks with an alacrity beyond her strength. Few doubted that she was dying—and it was plain that she thought so herself; for the Bible, which, in her friendlessness, she had always read more than other children who were too happy to reflect often on the Word of that Being from whom their

happiness flowed, was now, when leisure permitted, seldom or never out of her hands; and in lonely places, where there was no human ear to hearken, did the dying girl often support her heart, when quaking in natural fears of the grave, by singing to herself hymns and psalms. But her hour was not yet come—though by the inscrutable decrees of Providence doomed to be hideous with almost inextinguishable guilt. As for herself—she was innocent as the linnets that sang beside her in the broom, and innocent was she to be up to the last throbbings of her religious heart. When the sunshine fell on the leaves of her Bible, the orphan seemed to see in the holy words, brightening through the radiance, assurances of forgiveness of all her sins—small sins indeed—yet to her humble and contrite heart exceeding great—and to be pardoned only by the intercession of Him who died for us on the tree. Often, when clouds were in the sky, and blackness covered the Book, hope died away from the discoloured page—and the lonely creature wept and sobbed over the doom denounced on all who sin, and repent not—whether in deed or in thought. And thus religion became within her an awful thing—till, in her resignation, she feared to die. But look on that flower by the hill-side path, withered, as it seems, beyond the power of sun and air and dew and rain to restore it to life. Next day, you happen to return to the place, its leaves are of a dazzling green, its blossoms of a dazzling crimson. So was it with this Orphan. Nature, as if kindling towards her in sudden love, not only restored her in a few weeks to life—but to perfect health; and ere-long she, whom few had looked at, and for whom still fewer cared, was acknowledged to be the fairest girl in all the parish—while she continued to sit, as she had always done from her very childhood, on the *poor's form* in the lobby of the kirk. Such a face, such a figure, and such a manner, in one so poorly attired and so meanly placed, attracted the eyes of the young Ladies in the Patron's Gallery. Margaret Burnside was taken under their especial protection—sent for two years to a superior school, where she was taught all things useful for persons in humble life—and while yet scarcely fifteen, returning to her native parish, was appointed teacher of a small school of her own, to which were sent all the girls who could be spared from home, from those of parents poor as her own had been, up to those of the farmers and small proprietors, who knew the blessings of a good education—and that without it, the minister may preach in vain. And thus Margaret Burnside grew and blossomed like the lily of the field—and every eye blessed her—and she drew her breath in gratitude, piety, and peace.

Thus a few happy and useful years passed by—and it was forgotten by all—but herself—that Margaret Burnside was an orphan. But

to be without one near and dear blood-relative in all the world, must often, even to the happy heart of youthful innocence, be more than a pensive—a painful thought; and therefore, though Margaret Burnside was always cheerful among her little scholars, yet in the retirement of her own room, (a pretty parlour, with a window looking into a flower-garden,) and on her walks among the braes, her mien was somewhat melancholy, and her eyes wore that touching expression, which seems doubtfully to denote—neither joy nor sadness—but a habit of soul which, in its tranquillity, still partakes of the mournful, as if memory dwelt often on past sorrows, and hope scarcely ventured to indulge in dreams of future repose. That profound orphan-feeling embued her whole character; and sometimes, when the young Ladies from the Castle smiled praises upon her, she retired in gratitude to her chamber—and wept.

Among the friends at whose houses she visited were the family at Moorside, the highest hill-farm in the parish, and on which her father had been a hind. It consisted of the master, a man whose head was gray, his son and daughter, and a grandchild, her scholar, whose parents were dead. Gilbert Adamson had long been a widower—indeed his wife had never been in the parish, but had died abroad. He had been a soldier in his youth and prime of manhood; and when he came to settle at Moorside, he had been looked at with no very friendly eyes; for evil rumours of his character had preceded his arrival there—and in that peaceful pastoral parish, far removed from the world's strife, suspicions, without any good reason perhaps, had attached themselves to the morality and religion of a man, who had seen much foreign service, and had passed the best years of his life in the wars. It was long before these suspicions faded away, and with some they still existed in an invincible feeling of dislike or even aversion. But the natural fierceness and ferocity which, as these peaceful dwellers among the hills imagined, had at first, in spite of his efforts to control them, often dangerously exhibited themselves in fiery outbreaks, advancing age had gradually subdued; Gilbert Adamson had grown a hard-working and industrious man; affected, if he followed it not in sincerity, even an austere religious life; and as he possessed more than common sagacity and intelligence, he had acquired at last, if not won, a certain ascendancy in the parish, even over many whose hearts never opened nor warmed towards him—so that he was now an elder of the kirk—and, as the most unwilling were obliged to acknowledge, a just steward to the poor. His gray hairs were not honoured, but it would not be too much to say that they were respected. Many who had doubted him before came to think they had done him injustice, and sought to wipe away their fault by regarding him with esteem, and showing themselves willing to interchange all neighbourly kindnesses and services with all the family at Moorside. His son, though somewhat wild and unsteady, and too much addicted to the fascinating pastimes of flood and field, often so ruinous to the sons

of labour, and rarely long pursued against the law without vitiating the whole character, was a favourite with all the parish. Singularly handsome, and with manners above his birth, Ludovic was welcome wherever he went, both with young and old. No merry-making could deserve the name without him; and at all meetings for the display of feats of strength and agility, far and wide, through more counties than one, he was the champion. Nor had he received a mean education. All that the parish schoolmaster could teach he knew; and having been the darling companion of all the gentleman's sons in the Manse, the faculties of his mind had kept pace with theirs, and from them he had caught unconsciously that demeanour so far superior to what could have been expected from one in his humble condition, but which, at the same time, seemed so congenial with his happy nature as to be readily acknowledged to be one of its original gifts. Of his sister, Alice, it is sufficient to say, that she was the bosom-friend of Margaret Burnside, and that all who saw their friendship felt that it was just. The small parentless grand-daughter was also dear to Margaret—more than perhaps her heart knew, because that, like herself, she was an orphan. But the creature was also a merry and a madcap child, and her freakish pranks, and playful perversenesses, as she tossed her head in untameable glee, and went dancing and singing, like a bird on the boughs of a tree, all day long, by some strange sympathies entirely won the heart of her who, throughout all her own childhood, had been familiar with grief, and a lonely shedder of tears. And thus did Margaret love her, it might be said, even with a very mother's love. She generally passed her free Saturday afternoons at Moorside, and often slept there all night with little Ann in her bosom. At such times Ludovic was never from home, and many a Sabbath he walked with her to the kirk—all the family together—and once by themselves for miles along the moor—a forenoon of perfect sunshine, which returned upon him in his agony on his dying day.

No one said, no one thought that Ludovic and Margaret were lovers—nor were they, though well worthy indeed of each other's love; for the orphan's whole heart was filled and satisfied with a sense of duty, and all its affections were centred in her school, where all eyes blessed her, and where she had been placed for the good of all those gladsome creatures, by them who had rescued her from the penury that kills the soul, and whose gracious bounty she remembered even in her sleep. In her prayers she beseeched God to bless them rather than the wretch on her knees—their images, their names, were ever before her eyes and on her ear; and next to that peace of mind which passeth all understanding, and comes from the footstool of God into the humble, lowly, and contrite heart, was to that orphan, day and night, waking or sleeping, the bliss of her gratitude. And thus Ludovic to her was a brother, and no more; a name sacred as that of sister, by which she always called her Alice, and was so called in return.

But to Ludovic, who had a soul of fire, Margaret was dearer far than ever sister was to the brother whom, at the sacrifice of her own life, she might have rescued from death. Go where he might, a phantom was at his side—a pale fair face for ever fixed its melancholy eyes on his, as if foreboding something dismal even when they faintly smiled; and once he awoke at midnight, when all the house were asleep, crying, with shrieks, “O God of mercy! Margaret is murdered!” Mysterious passion of Love! that darkens its own dreams of delight with unimaginable horrors! Shall we call such dire bewilderment the superstition of troubled fantasy, or the inspiration of the prophetic soul!

From what seemingly insignificant sources—and by means of what humble instruments—may this life's best happiness be diffused over the households of industrious men! Here was the orphan daughter of forgotten paupers, both dead ere she could speak; herself, during all her melancholy childhood, a pauper even more enslaved than ever they had been—one of the most neglected and unvalued of all God's creatures—who, had she then died, would have been buried in some nettled nook of the kirkyard, nor her grave then watered almost by one single tear—suddenly brought out from the cold and cruel shade in which she had been withering away, by the interposition of human but angelic hands, into the heaven's most gracious sunshine, where all at once her beauty blossomed like the rose. She, who for so many years had been even begrudgingly fed on the poorest and scantiest fare, by Penury ungrateful for all her weak but zealous efforts to please by doing her best, in sickness and sorrow, at all her tasks, in or out of doors, and in all weathers, however rough and severe—was now raised to the rank of a moral, intellectual, and religious being, and presided over, tended, and instructed many little ones, far, far happier in their childhood than it had been her lot to be, and all growing up beneath her now untroubled eyes, in innocence, love, and joy inspired into their hearts by her, their young and happy benefactress. Not a human dwelling in all the parish, that had not reason to be thankful to Margaret Burnside. She taught them to be pleasant in their manners, neat in their persons, rational in their minds, pure in their hearts, and industrious in all their habits. Rudeness, coarseness, sullenness, all angry fits, and all idle dispositions—the besetting vices and sins of the children of the poor, whose home-education is often so miserably, and almost necessarily neglected—did this sweet Teacher, by the divine influence of meekness never ruffled, and tenderness never troubled, in a few months subdue and overcome—till her school-room, every day in the week, was, in its cheerfulness, sacred as a Sabbath, and murmured from morn till eve with the hum of perpetual happiness. The effects were soon felt in every house. All floors were tidier, and order and regularity enlivened every hearth. It was the pride of her scholars to get their own little gardens behind their parents' huts to bloom like that of the Brae—and, in imitation of that flowery

porch, to train up the pretty creepers on the wall. In the kirkyard, a smiling group every Sabbath forenoon waited for her at the gate—and walked, with her at their head, into the House of God—a beautiful procession to all their parents' eyes—one by one dropping away into their own seats, as the band moved along the little lobby, and the minister sitting in the pulpit all the while, looked solemnly down upon the fair flock—the shepherd of their souls!

It was Sabbath, but Margaret Burnside was not in the kirk. The congregation had risen to join in prayer, when the great door was thrown open, and a woman, appalled as for the house of worship, but wild and ghastly in her face and eyes as a maniac hunted by evil spirits, burst in upon the service, and, with uplifted hands, beseeched the man of God to forgive her irreverent entrance, for that the foulest and most unnatural murder had been done, and that her own eyes had seen the corpse of Margaret Burnside lying on the moor in a pool of blood! The congregation gave one groan, and then an outcry as if the roof of the kirk had been toppling over their heads. All cheeks waxed white, women fainted, and the firmest heart quaked with terror and pity, as once and again the affrighted witness, in the same words, described the horrid spectacle, and then rushed out into the open air, followed by hundreds, who for some minutes had been palsy-stricken; and now the kirkyard was all in a tumult round the body of her who lay in a swoon. In the midst of that dreadful ferment, there were voices crying aloud that the poor woman was mad, and that such horror could not be beneath the sun; for such a perpetration on the Sabbath-day, and first heard of just as the prayers of his people were about to ascend to the Father of all mercies, shocked belief, and doubt struggled with despair as in the helpless shudderings of some dream of blood. The crowd were at last prevailed on by their pastor to disperse, and sit down on the tombstones, and water being sprinkled over the face of her who still lay in that mortal swoon, and the air suffered to circulate freely round her, she again opened her glassy eyes, and raising herself on her elbow, stared on the multitude, all gathered there so wan and silent, and shrieked out, “The Day of Judgment! The Day of Judgment!”

The aged minister raised her on her feet, and led her to a grave, on which she sat down, and hid her face on his knees. “O that I should have lived to see the day—but dreadful are the decrees of the Most High—and she whom we all loved has been cruelly murdered! Carry me with you, people, and I will show you where lies her corpse.”

“Where—where is Ludovic Adamson?” cried a hoarse voice which none there had ever heard before; and all eyes were turned in one direction; but none knew who had spoken, and all again was hush. Then all at once a hundred voices repeated the same words, “Where—where is Ludovic Adamson?” and there was no reply. Then, indeed, was the kirkyard in an angry and a wrathful ferment, and men looked far into each other's

eyes for confirmation of their suspicions. And there was whispering about things, that, though in themselves light as air, seemed now charged with hideous import; and then arose sacred appeals to Heaven's eternal justice, horribly mingled with oaths and curses; and all the crowd, springing to their feet, pronounced, "that no other but he could be the murderer."

It was remembered now, that for months past Margaret Burnside had often looked melancholy—that her visits had been less frequent to Moorside; and one person in the crowd said, that a few weeks ago she had come upon them suddenly in a retired place, when Margaret was weeping bitterly, and Ludovic tossing his arms, seemingly in wrath and distraction. All agreed that of late he had led a disturbed and reckless life—and that something dark and suspicious had hung about him, wherever he went, as if he were haunted by an evil conscience. But did not strange men sometimes pass through the Moor—squalid mendicants, robber-like, from the far-off city—one by one, yet seemingly belonging to the same gang—with bludgeons in their hands—half-naked, and often drunken in their hunger, as at the doors of lonesome houses they demanded alms; or more like foot-pads than beggars, with stern gestures, rising up from the ditches on the way-side, stopped the frightened women and children going upon errands, and thanklessly received pence from the poor? One of them must have been the murderer! But then, again, the whole tide of suspicion would set in upon Ludovic—her lover; for the darker and more dreadful the guilt, the more welcome is it to the fears of the imagination when its waking dreams are floating in blood.

A tall figure came forward from the porch, and all was silence when the congregation beheld the Father of the suspected criminal. He stood still as a tree in a calm day—trunk, limbs, moved not—and his gray head was uncovered. He then stretched out his arm, not in an imploring, but in a commanding attitude, and essayed to speak; but his white lips quivered, and his tongue refused its office. At last, almost fiercely, he uttered, "Who dares denounce my son?" and like the growling thunder, the crowd cried, "All—all—he is the murderer!" Some said that the old man smiled; but it could have been but a convulsion of the features—outraged nature's wrung-out and writhing expression of disdain, to show how a father's love brooks the cruelty of foolish falsehood and injustice.

Men, women, and children—all whom grief and horror had not made helpless—moved away towards the Moor—the woman who had seen the sight leading the way; for now her whole strength had returned to her, and she was drawn and driven by an irresistible passion to look again at what had almost destroyed her judgment. Now they were miles from the kirk, and over some brushwood, at the edge of a morass some distance from the common footpath, crows were seen diving and careering in the air, and a raven flapping suddenly out of the covert, sailed away with a

savage croak along a range of cliffs. The whole multitude stood stock-still at that carion-sound. The guide said shudderingly, in a low hurried voice, "See, see—that is her mantle"—and there indeed Margaret lay, all in a heap, maimed, mangled, murdered, with a hundred gashes. The corpse seemed as if it had been baked in frost, and was embedded in coagulated blood. Shreds and patches of her dress, torn away from her bosom, bestrewed the bushes—for many yards round about, there had been the trampling of feet, and a long lock of hair that had been torn from her temples, with the dewy yet unmelting on it, was lying upon a plant of broom, a little way from the corpse. The first to lift the body from the horrid bed was Gilbert Adamson. He had been long familiar with death in all its ghastliness, and all had now looked to him—forgetting for the moment that he was the father of the murderer—to perform the task from which they recoiled in horror. Resting on one knee, he placed the corpse on the other—and who could have believed, that even the most violent and cruel death could have wrought such a change on a face once so beautiful! All was distortion—and terrible it was to see the dim glazed eyes, fixedly open, and the orbs insensible to the strong sun that smote her face white as snow among the streaks as if left by bloody fingers! Her throat was all discoloured—and a silk handkerchief twisted into a cord, that had manifestly been used in the murder, was of a redder hue than when it had veiled her breast. No one knows what horror his eyes are able to look on, till they are tried. A circle of stupified gazers was drawn by a horrid fascination closer and closer round the corpse—and women stood there holding children by the hands, and fainted not, but observed the sight, and shuddered without shrieking, and stood there all dumb as ghosts. But the body was now borne along by many hands—at first none knew in what direction, till many voices muttered, "To Moorside—to Moorside"—and in an hour it was laid on the bed in which Margaret Burnside had so often slept with her beloved little Ann in her bosom.

The hand of some one had thrown a cloth over the corpse. The room was filled with people—but all their power and capacity of horror had been exhausted—and the silence was now almost like that which attends a natural death, when all the neighbours are assembled for the funeral. Alice, with little Ann beside her, knelt at the bed, nor feared to lean her head close to the covered corpse—sobbing out syllables that showed how passionately she prayed—and that she and her little niece—and, oh! for that unhappy father—were delivering themselves up into the hands of God. The father knelt not—neither did he sit down—nor move—nor groan—but stood at the foot of the bed, with arms folded almost sternly—and with eyes fixed on the sheet, in which there seemed to be neither ruth nor dread—but only an austere composure, which were it indeed but resignation to that dismal decree of Providence, had been most sublime—but who can see into

the heart of a man either righteous or wicked, and know what may be passing there, breathed from the gates of heaven or of hell!

Soon as the body had been found, shepherds and herdsmen, fleet of foot as the deer, had set off to scour the country far and wide, hill and glen, mountain and morass, moor and wood, for the murderer. If he be on the face of the earth, and not self-plunged in despairing suicide into some quagmire, he will be found—for all the population of many districts are now afoot, and precipices are clomb till now brushed but by the falcons. A figure, like that of a man, is seen by some of the hunters from a hill-top, lying among the stones by the side of a solitary loch. They separate, and descend upon him, and then gathering in, they behold the man whom they seek—Ludovic Adamson, the murderer.

His face is pale and haggard—yet flushed as if by a fever centered in his heart. That is no dress for the Sabbath-day—soiled and savage-looking—and giving to the eyes that search an assurance of guilt. He starts to his feet, as they think, like some wild beast surprised in his lair, and gathering itself up to fight or fly. But—strange enormity—a Bible is in his hand! And the shepherd who first seized him, taking the book out of his grasp, looks into the page, and reads, “Whoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be surely shed.” On a leaf is written, in her own well-known hand, “The gift of Margaret Burnside!” Not a word is said by his captors—they offer no needless violence—no indignities—but answer all inquiries of surprise and astonishment (Oh! can one so young be so hardened in wickedness!) by a stern silence, and upbraiding eyes, that like daggers must stab his heart. At last he walks doggedly and sullenly along, and refuses to speak—yet his tread is firm—there is no want of composure in his face—now that the first passion of fear or anger has left it; and now that they have the murderer in their clutch, some begin almost to pity him, and others to believe, or at least to hope, that he may be innocent. As yet they have said not a word of the crime of which they accuse him; but let him try to master the expression of his voice and his eyes as he may, guilt is in those stealthy glances—guilt is in those reckless tones. And why does he seek to hide his right hand in his bosom? And whatever he may affect to say—they ask him not—most certainly that stain on his shirt-collar is blood. But now they are at Moor-side.

There is still a great crowd all round about the house—in the garden—and at the door—and a troubled cry announces that the criminal has been taken, and is close at hand. His father meets him at the gate; and, kneeling down, holds up his clasped hands, and says, “My son, if thou art guilty, confess, and die.” The criminal angrily waves his father aside, and walks towards the door. “Fools! fools! what mean ye by this? What crime has been committed? And how dare ye to think me the criminal? Am I like a murderer?”—“We never spoke to him of the murder—we never spoke to him of the murder!” cried one of the

men who now held him by the arm; and all assembled then exclaimed, “Guilty, guilty—that one word will hang him! Oh, pity, pity, for his father and poor sister—this will break their hearts!” Appalled, yet firm of foot, the prisoner forced his way into the house, and turning, in his confusion, into the chamber on the left, there he beheld the corpse of the murdered on the bed—for the sheet had been removed—as yet not laid out, and disfigured and deformed just as she had been found on the moor, in the same misshapen heap of death! One long insane glare—one shriek, as if all his heart-strings at once had burst—and then down fell the strong man on the floor like lead. One trial was past which no human hardihood could endure—another, and yet another awaits him; but them he will bear as the guilty brave have often borne them, and the most searching eye shall not see him quail at the bar or on the scaffold.

They lifted the stricken wretch from the floor, placed him in a chair, and held him upright, till he should revive from the fit. And he soon did revive; for health flowed in all his veins, and he had the strength of a giant. But when his senses returned, there was none to pity him; for the shock had given an expression of guilty horror to all his looks, and, like a man walking in his sleep under the temptation of some dreadful dream, he moved with fixed eyes towards the bed, and looking at the corpse, gobbled in hideous laughter, and then wept and tore his hair like a distracted woman or child. Then he stooped down as he would kiss the face, but staggered back, and, covering his eyes with his hands, uttered such a groan as is sometimes heard rending the sinner’s breast when the avenging Furies are upon him in his dreams. All who heard it felt that he was guilty; and there was a fierce cry through the room of “Make him touch the body, and if he be the murderer, it will bleed!”—“Fear not, Ludovic, to touch it, my boy,” said his father; “bleed afresh it will not, for thou art innocent: and savage though now they be who once were proud to be thy friends, even they will believe thee guiltless when the corpse refuses to bear witness against thee, and not a drop leaves its quiet heart!” But his son spake not a word, nor did he seem to know that his father had spoken; but he suffered himself to be led passively towards the bed. One of the bystanders took his hand and placed it on the naked breast, when out of the corners of the teeth-clenched mouth, and out of the swollen nostrils, two or three blood-drops visibly oozed; and a sort of shrieking shout declared the sacred faith of all the crowd in the dreadful ordeal. “What body is this? ’tis all over blood!” said the prisoner, looking with an idiot vacancy on the faces that surrounded him. But now the sheriff of the county entered the room, along with some officers of justice, and he was spared any further shocks from that old saving superstition. His wrists soon after were manacled. These were all the words he had uttered since he recovered from the fit; and he seemed now in a state of stupor.

Ludovic Adamson, after examination of wit

nesses who crowded against him from many unexpected quarters, was committed that very Sabbath night to prison on a charge of murder. On the Tuesday following, the remains of Margaret Burnside were interred. All the parish were at the funeral. In Scotland it is not customary for females to join in the last simple ceremonies of death. But in this case they did; and all her scholars, in the same white dresses in which they used to walk with her at their head into the kirk on Sabbaths, followed the bier. Alice and little Ann were there, nearest the coffin, and the father of him who had wrought all this was one of its supporters. The head of the murdered girl rested, it might be said, on his shoulder—but none can know the strength which God gives to his servants—and all present felt for him, as he walked steadily under that dismal burden, a pity, and even an affection, which they had been unable to yield to him ere he had been so sorely tried. The Ladies from the Castle were among the other mourners, and stood by the open grave. A sunnier day had never shone from heaven, and that very grave itself partook of the brightness, as the coffin—with the gilt letters, “Margaret Burnside, Aged 18”—was let down, and in the darkness below disappeared. No flowers were sprinkled there—nor afterwards planted on the turf—vain offerings of unavailing sorrow! But in that nook—beside the bodies of her poor parents—she was left for the grass to grow over her, as over the other humble dead; and nothing but the very simplest headstone was placed there, with a sentence from Scripture below the name. There was less weeping, less sobbing, than at many other funerals; for as sure as Mercy ruled the skies, all believed that she was there—all knew it, just as if the gates of heaven had opened and showed her a white-robed spirit at the right hand of the throne. And why should any rueful lamentation have been wailed over the senseless dust? But on the way home over the hills, and in the hush of evening beside their hearths, and in the stillness of night on their beds—all—young and old—all did nothing but weep!

For weeks—such was the pity, grief, and awe inspired by this portentous crime and lamentable calamity, that all the domestic on-goings in all the houses far and wide, were melancholy and mournful, as if the country had been fearing a visitation of the plague. Sin, it was felt, had brought not only sorrow on the parish, but shame that ages would not wipe away; and strangers, as they travelled through the moor, would point the place where the foulest murder had been committed in all the annals of crime. As for the family at Moorside, the daughter had their boundless compassion, though no eye had seen her since the funeral; but people, in speaking of the father, would still shake their heads, and put their fingers to their lips, and say to one another in whispers, that Gilbert Adamson had once been a bold, bad man—that his religion, in spite of all his repulsive austerity, wore not the aspect of truth—and that, had he held a stricter and a stronger hand on the errors of his misguided son, this foul deed had not been

perpetrated, nor that wretched sinner’s soul given to perdition. Yet others had gentler and humaner thoughts. They remembered him walking along God-supported beneath the bier—and at the mouth of the grave—and feared to look on that head—formerly grizzled, but now quite gray—when on the very first Sabbath after the murder he took his place in the elder’s seat, and was able to stand up, along with the rest of the congregation, when the minister prayed for peace to his soul, and hoped for the deliverance out of jeopardy of him now lying in bonds. A low Amen went all round the kirk at these words; for the most hopeless called to mind that maxim of law, equity, and justice—that every man under accusation of crime should be held innocent till he is proved to be guilty. Nay, a human tribunal might condemn him, and yet might he stand acquitted before the tribunal of God.

There were various accounts of the behaviour of the prisoner. Some said that he was desperately hardened—others, sunk in sullen apathy and indifference—and one or two persons belonging to the parish who had seen him, declared that he seemed to care not for himself, but to be plunged in profound melancholy for the fate of Margaret Burnside, whose name he involuntarily mentioned, and then bowed his head on his knees and wept. His guilt he neither admitted at that interview, nor denied; but he confessed that some circumstances bore hard against him, and that he was prepared for the event of his trial—condemnation and death. “But if you are not guilty, Ludovic, *who can be the murderer?*” Not the slightest shade of suspicion has fallen on any other person—and did not, alas! the body bleed when?”—The unhappy wretch sprang up from the bed, it was said, at these words, and hurried like a madman back and forward along the stone floor of his cell. “Yea—yea!” at last he cried, “the mouth and nostrils of my Margaret did indeed bleed when they pressed down my hand on her cold bosom. It is God’s truth!” “God’s truth?”—“Yes—God’s truth. I saw first one drop, and then another, trickle towards me—and I prayed to our Saviour to wipe them off before other eyes might behold the dreadful witnesses against me; but at that hour Heaven was most unmerciful—for those two small drops—as all of you saw—soon became a very stream—and all her face, neck, and breast—you saw it as well as I miserable—were at last drenched in blood. Then I may have confessed that I was guilty—did I, or did I not, confess it? Tell me—for I remember nothing distinctly;—but if I did—the judgment of offended Heaven, then punishing me for my sins, had made me worse than mad—and so had all your abhorrent eyes; and, men, if I did confess, it was the cruelty of God that drove me to it—and your cruelty—which was great; for no pity had any one for me that day, though Margaret Burnside lay before me a murdered corpse—and a hoarse whisper came to my ear urging me to confess—I well believe from no human lips, but from the Father of Lies, who, at that hour, was suffered to leave the pit to ensnare my soul.” Such was said to have been the main sense of what he uttered in the

presence of two or three who had formerly been among his most intimate friends, and who knew not, on leaving his cell and coming into the open air, whether to think him innocent or guilty. As long as they thought they saw his eyes regarding them, and that they heard his voice speaking, they believed him innocent; but when the expression of the tone of his voice, and of the look of his eyes—which they had felt belonged to innocence—died away from their memory—then arose against him the strong, strange, circumstantial evidence, which, wisely or unwisely—lawyers and judges have said *cannot lie*—and then, in their hearts, one and all of them pronounced him guilty.

But had not his father often visited the prisoner's cell? Once—and once only; for in obedience to his son's passionate prayer, beseeching him—if there were any mercy left either on earth or in heaven—never more to enter that dungeon, the miserable parent had not again entered the prison; but he had been seen one morning at dawn, by one who knew his person, walking round and round the walls, staring up at the black building in distraction, especially at one small grated window in the north tower—and it is most probable that he had been pacing his rounds there during all the night. Nobody could conjecture, however dimly, what was the meaning of his banishment from his son's cell. Gilbert Adamson, so stern to others, even to his own only daughter, had been always but too indulgent to his Ludovic—and had that lost wretch's guilt, so exceeding great, changed his heart into stone, and made the sight of his old father's gray hairs hateful to his eyes? But then the jailer, who had heard him imploring—beseeching—commanding his father to remain till after the trial at Moorside, said, that all the while the prisoner sobbed and wept like a child; and that when he unlocked the door of the cell, to let the old man out, it was a hard thing to tear away the arms and hands of Ludovic from his knees, while the father sat like a stone image on the bed, and kept his tearless eyes fixed sternly upon the wall, as if not a soul had been present, and he himself had been a criminal condemned next day to die.

The father had obeyed, *religiously*, that miserable injunction, and from religion it seemed he had found comfort. For Sabbath after Sabbath he was at the kirk—he stood, as he had been wont to do for years, at the poor's plate, and returned grave salutations to those who dropt their mite into the small sacred treasury—his eyes calmly, and even critically, regarded the pastor during prayer and sermon—and his deep bass voice was heard, as usual, through all the house of God in the Psalms. On week-days, he was seen by passers-by to drive his flocks afield, and to overlook his sheep on the hill-pastures, or in the pen-fold; and as it was still spring, and seed-time had been late this season, he was observed holding the plough, as of yore; nor had his skill deserted him—for the furrows were as straight as if drawn by a rule on paper—and soon bright and beautiful was the braid on all the low lands of his farm. The Comforter was with him, and, sorely as he had been tried, his

heart was not yet wholly broken; and it was believed that, for years, he might outlive the blow that at first had seemed more than a mortal man might bear and be! Yet that his wo, though hidden, was dismal, all erelong knew, from certain tokens that intrenched his face—cheeks shrunk and fallen—brow not so much furrowed as scarred, eyes quenched, hair thinner and thinner far, as if he himself had torn it away in handfuls during the solitude of midnight—and now absolutely as white as snow; and over the whole man an indescribable ancientness far beyond his years—though they were many, and most of them had been passed in torrid climes—all showed how grief has its agonies as destructive as those of guilt, and those the most wasting when they work in the heart and in the brain, unrelieved by the shedding of one single tear—when the very soul turns dry as dust, and life is imprisoned, rather than mingled, in the decaying—the mouldering body!

The Day of Trial came, and all labour was suspended in the parish, as if it had been a mourning fast. Hundreds of people from this remote district poured into the circuit-town, and besieged the court-house. Horsemen were in readiness, soon as the verdict should be returned, to carry the intelligence—of life or death—to all those glens. A few words will suffice to tell the trial, the nature of the evidence, and its issue. The prisoner, who stood at the bar in black, appeared—though miserably changed from a man of great muscular power and activity, a magnificent man, into a tall thin shadow—perfectly unappalled; but in a face so white, and wasted, and wo-begone, the most profound physiognomist could read not one faintest symptom either of hope or fear, trembling or trust, guilt or innocence. He hardly seemed to belong to this world, and stood fearfully and ghastly conspicuous between the officers of justice, above all the crowd that devoured him with their eyes, all leaning towards the bar to catch the first sound of his voice, when to the indictment he should plead “Not Guilty.” These words he did utter, in a hollow voice altogether passionless, and then was suffered to sit down, which he did in a manner destitute of all emotion. During all the many long hours of his trial, he never moved head, limbs, or body, except once, when he drank some water, which he had not asked for, but which was given to him by a friend. The evidence was entirely circumstantial, and consisted of a few damning facts, and of many of the very slightest sort, which, taken singly, seemed to mean nothing, but which, when considered all together, seemed to mean something against him—how much or how little, there were among the agitated audience many differing opinions. But slight as they were, either singly or together, they told fearfully against the prisoner, when connected with the fatal few which no ingenuity could ever explain away; and though ingenuity did all it could do, when wielded by eloquence of the highest order—and as the prisoner's counsel sat down, there went a rustle and a buzz through the court, and a communication of looks and whispers, that seemed

to denote that there were hopes of his acquittal—yet, if such hopes there were, they were deadened by the recollection of the calm, clear, logical address to the jury by the counsel for the crown, and destroyed by the judge's charge, which amounted almost to demonstration of guilt, and concluded with a confession due to his oath and conscience, that he saw not how the jury could do their duty to their Creator and their fellow-creatures, but by returning *one* verdict. They retired to consider it; and, during a deathlike silence, all eyes were bent on a deathlike image.

It had appeared in evidence, that the murder had been committed, at least all the gashes inflicted—for there were also finger-marks of strangulation—with a bill-hook, such as foresters use in lopping trees; and several witnesses swore that the bill-hook which was shown them, stained with blood, and with hair sticking on the haft—belonged to Ludovic Adamson. It was also given in evidence—though some doubts rested on the nature of the precise words—that on that day, in the room with the corpse, he had given a wild and incoherent denial to the question then put to him in the din, “What he had done with the bill-hook?” Nobody had seen it in his possession since the spring before; but it had been found, after several weeks’ search, in a hag in the moss, in the direction that he would have most probably taken—had he been the murderer—when flying from the spot to the loch where he was seized. The shoes which he had on when taken, fitted the foot-marks on the ground, not far from the place of the murder, but not so perfectly as another pair which were found in the house. But that other pair, it was proved, belonged to the old man; and therefore the correspondence between the footmarks and the prisoner’s shoes, though not perfect, was a circumstance of much suspicion. But a far stronger fact, in this part of the evidence, was sworn to against the prisoner. Though there was no blood on his shoes—when apprehended his legs were bare—though that circumstance, strange as it may seem, had never been noticed till he was on the way to prison! His stockings had been next day found lying on the sward, near the shore of the loch, manifestly after having been washed and laid out to dry in the sun. At mention of this circumstance a cold shudder ran through the court; but neither that, nor indeed any other circumstance in the evidence—not even the account of the appearance which the murdered body exhibited when found on the moor, or when afterwards laid on the bed—extorted from the prisoner one groan—one sigh—or touched the imperturbable deathliness of his countenance. It was proved, that when searched—in prison, and not before; for the agitation that reigned over all assembled in the room at Moorside that dreadful day, had confounded even those accustomed to deal with suspected criminals—there were found in his pocket a small French gold watch, and also a gold brooch, which the ladies of the Castle had given to Margaret Burnside. On these being taken from him, he had said nothing, but looked aghast. A piece of torn and bloody paper, which had

been picked up near the body, was sworn to be in his handwriting; and though the meaning of the words—yet legible—was obscure, they seemed to express a request that Margaret would meet him on the moor on that Saturday afternoon she was murdered. The words “Saturday”—“meet me”—“last time,”—were not indistinct, and the paper was of the same quality and colour with some found in a drawer in his bed-room at Moorside. It was proved that he had been drinking with some dissolute persons—poachers and the like—in a public house in a neighbouring parish all Saturday, till well on in the afternoon, when he left them in a state of intoxication—and was then seen running along the hill side in the direction of the moor. Where he passed the night between the Saturday and the Sabbath, he could give no account, except once when unasked, and as if speaking to himself, he was overheard by the jailer to mutter, “Oh! that fatal night—that fatal night!” And then, when suddenly interrogated, “Where were you?” he answered, “Asleep on the hill;” and immediately relapsed into a state of mental abstraction. These were the chief circumstances against him, which his counsel had striven to explain away. That most eloquent person dwelt with affecting earnestness on the wickedness of putting any evil construction on the distracted behaviour of the wretched man when brought without warning upon the sudden sight of the mangled corpse of the beautiful girl, whom all allowed he had most passionately and tenderly loved; and he strove to prove—as he did prove to the conviction of many—that such behaviour was incompatible with such guilt, and almost of itself established his innocence. All that was sworn to *against* him, as having passed in that dreadful room, was in truth *for* him—unless all our knowledge of the best and of the worst of human nature were not, as folly, to be given to the winds. He beseeched the jury, therefore, to look at all the other circumstances that did indeed seem to bear hard upon the prisoner, in the light of his innocence, and not of his guilt, and that they would all fade into nothing. What mattered his possession of the watch and other trinkets? Lovers as they were, might not the unhappy girl have given them to him for temporary keepsakes? Or might he not have taken them from her in some playful mood, or received them—(and the brooch was cracked, and the mainspring of the watch broken, though the glass was whole)—to get them repaired in the town, which he often visited, and she never? Could human credulity for one moment believe, that such a man as the prisoner at the bar had been sworn to be by a host of witnesses—and especially by that witness, who, with such overwhelming solemnity, had declared he loved him as his own son, and would have been proud if Heaven had given him such a son—he who had baptized him, and known him well ever since a child—that such a man could *rob* the body of her whom he had violated and murdered? If, under the instigation of the devil, he had violated and murdered her, and for a moment were made the hideous supposition, did vast hell hold that demon whose voice would have

tempted the violator and murderer—suppose him both—yea, that man at the bar—sworn to by all the parish, if need were, as a man of tenderest charities, and generosity unbounded—in the lust of lucre, consequent on the satiating of another lust—to rob his victim of a few trinkets! Let loose the wildest imagination into the realms of wildest wickedness, and yet they dared not, as they feared God, to credit for a moment the union of such appalling and such paltry guilt, in *that man* who now trembled not before them, but who seemed cut off from all the sensibilities of this life by the scythe of Misery that had shorn him down! But why try to recount, however feebly, the line of defence taken by the speaker, who on that day seemed all but inspired. The sea may overturn rocks, or fire consume them till they split in pieces; but a crisis there sometimes is in man's destiny, which all the powers ever lodged in the lips of man, were they touched with a coal from heaven, cannot avert, and when even he who strives to save, feels and knows that he is striving all in vain—ay, vain, as a worm—to arrest the tread of Fate about to trample down its victim into the dust. All hoped—many almost believed—that the prisoner would be acquitted—that a verdict of “Not Proven,” at least, if not of “Not Guilty,” would be returned; but *they* had not been sworn to do justice before man and before God—and, if need were, to seal up even the fountains of mercy in their hearts—flowing, and easily set a-flowing, by such a spectacle as that bar presented—a man already seeming to belong unto the dead!

In about a quarter of an hour the jury returned to the box—and the verdict, having been sealed with black wax, was handed up to the Judge, who read, “We unanimously find the prisoner Guilty.” He then stood up to receive the sentence of death. Not a dry eye was in the court during the Judge's solemn and affecting address to the criminal—except those of the Shadow on whom had been pronounced the doom. “Your body will be hung in chains on the moor—on a gibbet erected on the spot where you murdered the victim of your unhalloved lust, and there will your bones bleach in the sun, and rattle in the wind, after the insects and the birds of the air have devoured your flesh; and in all future times, the spot on which, God-forsaking and God-forsaken, you perpetrated that double crime, at which all humanity shudders, will be looked on from afar by the traveller passing through that lonesome wild with a sacred horror!” Here the voice of the Judge faltered, and he covered his face with his hands; but the prisoner stood unmoved in figure, and in face untroubled—and when all was closed, was removed from the bar, the same ghostlike and unearthly phantom, seemingly unconscious of what had passed, or even of his own existence.

Surely now he will suffer his old father to visit him in his cell! “Once more only—only once more let me see him before I die!” were his words to the clergyman of the parish, whose Manse he had so often visited when a young and happy boy. That servant of Christ had not forsaken him whom now all the world

had forsaken. As free from sin himself as might be mortal and fallen man—mortal because fallen—he knew from Scripture and from nature, that in “the lowest deep there is still a lower deep” in wickedness, into which all of woman born may fall, unless held back by the arm of the Almighty Being, whom they must serve steadfastly in holiness and truth. He knew, too, from the same source, that man cannot sin beyond the reach of God's mercy—it the worst of all imaginable sinners seek, in a Bible-breathed spirit at last, that mercy through the Atonement of the Redeemer. Daily—and nightly—he visited that cell; nor did he fear to touch the hand—now wasted to the bone—which at the temptation of the Prince of the Air, who is mysteriously suffered to enter in at the gates of every human heart that is guarded not by the flaming sword of God's own Seraphim—was lately drenched in the blood of the most innocent creature that ever looked on the day. Yet a sore trial it was to his Christianity to find the criminal so obdurate. He would make no confession. Yet said that it was fit—that it was far best that he should die—that he deserved death! But ever when the deed without a name was alluded to, his tongue was tied; and once in the midst of an impassioned prayer, beseeching him to listen to conscience and confess—he that prayed shuddered to behold him frown, and to hear bursting out in terrible energy, “Cease—cease to torment me, or you will drive me to deny my God!”

No father came to visit him in his cell. On the day of trial he had been missing from Moorside, and was seen next morning—(where he had been all night never was known—though it was afterwards rumoured that one like him had been seen sitting, as the gloaming darkened, on the very spot of the murder)—wandering about the hills, hither and thither, and round and round about, like a man stricken with blindness, and vainly seeking to find his home. When brought into the house, his senses were gone, and he had lost the power of speech. All he could do was to mutter some disjointed syllables, which he did continually, without one moment's cessation, one unintelligible and most rueful moan! The figure of his daughter seemed to cast no image on his eyes—blind and dumb he sat where he had been placed, perpetually wringing his hands, with his shaggy eyebrows drawn high up his forehead, and the fixed orbs—though stone-blind at least to all real things—beneath them flashing fire. He had borne up bravely—almost to the last—but had some tongue syllabled his son's doom in the solitude, and at that instant had insanity smitten him!

Such utter prostration of intellect had been expected by none; for the old man, up to the very night before the Trial, had expressed the most confident trust of his son's acquittal. Nothing had ever served to shake his conviction of his innocence—though he had always forbore speaking about the circumstances of the murder—and had communicated to nobody any of the grounds on which he more than hoped in a case so hopeless; and though a trouble in his eyes often gave the lie to his lip:

when he used to say to the silent neighbours, "We shall soon see him back at Moorside." Had his belief in his Ludovic's innocence, and his trust in God that that innocence would be established and set free, been so sacred, that the blow, when it did come, struck him like a hammer, and felled him to the ground, from which he had risen with a riven brain! In whatever way the shock had been given, it had been terrible; for old Gilbert Adamson was now a confirmed lunatic, and keepers were in Moorside—not keepers from a mad-house—for his daughter could not afford such tendence—but two of her brother's friends, who sat up with him alternately, night and day, while the arms of the old man, in his distraction, had to be bound with cords. That dreadful moaning was at an end now; but the echoes of the hills responded to his yells and shrieks; and people were afraid to go near the house. It was proposed among the neighbours to take Alice and little Ann out of it; and an asylum for them was in the Manse; but Alice would not stir at all their entreaties; and as, in such a case, it would have been too shocking to tear her away by violence, she was suffered to remain with him who knew her not, but who often—it was said—stared distractedly upon her, as if she had been some fiend sent in upon his insanity from the place of punishment. Weeks passed on, and still she was there—hiding herself at times from those terrifying eyes; and from her watching corner, waiting from morn till night, and from night till morn—for she seldom lay down to sleep, and had never undressed herself since that fatal sentence—for some moment of exhausted horror, when she might steal out, and carry some slight gleam of comfort, however evanescent, to the glimmer or the gloom in which the brain of her Father swam through a dream of blood. But there were no lucid intervals; and ever as she moved towards him, like a pitying angel, did he furiously rage against her, as if she had been a fiend. At last, she who, though yet so young, had lived to see the murdered corpse of her dearest friend—murdered by her own only brother, whom, in secret, that murdered maiden had most tenderly loved—that murderous brother loaded with prison-chains, and condemned to the gibbet for inexpiable and unpardonable crimes—her father raving like a demon, self-murderous were his hands but free, nor visited by one glimpse of mercy from Him who rules the skies—after having borne more than, as she meekly said, had ever poor girl borne, she took to her bed quite heart-broken, and, the night before the day of execution, died. As for poor little Ann, she had been wiled away some weeks before; and in the blessed thoughtlessness of childhood, was not without hours of happiness among her playmates on the braes.

The Morning of that Day arose, and the Moor was all blackened with people round the tall gibbet, that seemed to have grown, with its horrid arms, out of the ground during the night. No sound of axes or hammers had been heard clinking during the dark hours—nothing had been seen passing along the road; the windows of all the houses from which

any thing could have been seen, had been shut fast against all horrid sights—and the horses' hoofs and the wheels must have been muffled that had brought that hideous Framework to the Moor. But there it now stood—a dreadful Tree! The sun moved higher and higher up the sky, and all the eyes of that congregation were at once turned towards the east, for a dull sound, as of rumbling wheels and trampling feet, seemed shaking the Moor in that direction; and lo! surrounded with armed men on horseback, and environed with halberds, came on a cart, in which three persons seemed to be sitting, he in the middle all dressed in white—the death-clothes of the murderer—the un pitying shedder of most innocent blood.

There was no bell to toll there—but at the very moment he was ascending the scaffold, a black cloud knelled thunder, and many hundreds of people all at once fell down upon their knees. The man in white lifted up his eyes, and said, "O Lord God of Heaven! and Thou his blessed Son, who died to save sinners! accept this sacrifice!"

Not one in all that immense crowd could have known that that white apparition was Ludovic Adamson. His hair, that had been almost jet-black, was now white as his face—as his figure, dressed, as it seemed, for the grave. Are they going to execute the murderer in his shroud? Stone-blind, and stone-deaf, there he stood—yet had he, without help, walked up the steps of the scaffold. A hymn of several voices arose—the man of God close beside the criminal, with the Bible in his uplifted hands; but those bloodless lips had no motion—with him this world was not, though yet he was in life—in life, and no more! And was this the man who, a few months ago, flinging the fear of death from him, as a flash of sunshine flings aside the shades, had descended into that pit which an hour before had been bellowing, as the foul vapours exploded like cannons, and brought up the bodies of them who had perished in the womb of the earth? Was this he who once leaped into the devouring fire, and re-appeared, after all had given over for lost the glorious boy, with an infant in his arms, while the flames seemed to eddy back, that they might scathe not the head of the deliverer, and a shower of blessings fell upon him as he laid it in its mother's bosom, and made the heart of the widow to sing for joy? It is he. And now the executioner pulls down the cord from the beam, and fastens it round the criminal's neck. His face is already covered, and that fatal handkerchief is in his hand. The whole crowd are now kneeling, and one multitudinous sob convulses the air;—when wild outcries, and shrieks, and yells, are at that moment heard from the distant gloom of the glen that opens up to Moorside, and three figures, one far in advance of the others, come flying, as on the wings of the wind, to the gibbet. Hundreds started to their feet, and "Tis the maniac—'tis the lunatic!" was the cry. Precipitating himself down a rocky hillside, that seemed hardly accessible but to the goats, the maniac, the lunatic, at a few desperate leaps and bounds, just as it was expected he would have been dashed in pieces, alighted

unstunned upon the level greensward; and now, far ahead of his keepers, with incredible swiftness neared the scaffold—and the dense crowd making a lane for him in their fear and astonishment, he flew up the ladder to the horrid platform, and grasping his son in his arms, howled dreadfully over him; and then with a loud voice cried, “Saved—saved—saved!”

So sudden had been that wild rush, that all the officers of justice—the very executioner—stood aghast; and now the prisoner’s neck is free from that accursed cord—his face is once more visible without that hideous shroud—and he sinks down senseless on the scaffold. “Seize him—seize him!” and he was seized—but no maniac—no lunatic—was the father now—for during the night, and during the dawn, and during the morn, and on to midday—on to the HOUR OF ONE—when all rueful preparations were to be completed—had Providence been clearing and calming the tumult in that troubled brain; and as the cottage clock struck ONE, memory brightened at the chime into a perfect knowledge of the past, and prophetic imagination saw the future lowering upon the dismal present. All night long, with the cunning of a madman—for all night long he had still been mad—the miserable old man had been disengaging his hands from the manacles, and that done, springing like a wild beast from his cage, he flew out of the open door, nor could a horse’s speed on that fearful road have overtaken him before he reached the scaffold.

No need was there to hold the miserable man. He who had been so furious in his manacles at Moorside, seemed now, to the people at a distance, calm as when he used to sit in the elder’s seat beneath the pulpit in that small kirk. But they who were near or on the scaffold, saw something horrid in the fixedness of his countenance. “Let go your hold of me, ye fools!” he muttered to some of the mean wretches of the law, who still had him in their clutch—and tossing his hands on high, cried with a loud voice, “Give ear, ye Heavens! and hear, O Earth! I am the Violator—I am the Murderer!”

The moor groaned as in earthquake—and then all that congregation bowed their heads with a rustling noise, like a wood smitten by the wind. Had they heard aright the unimaginable confession? His head had long been gray—he had reached the term allotted to man’s mortal life here below—threescore and ten. Morning and evening, never had the Bible been out of his hands at the hour set apart for family worship. And who so eloquent as he in expounding its most dreadful mysteries? The unregenerate heart of man, he had ever said—in scriptural phrase—was “desperately wicked.” Desperately wicked indeed! And now again he tossed his arms wrathfully—so the wild motion looked—in the wrathful skies. “I ravished—I murdered her—ye know it, ye evil spirits in the depths of hell!” Conspiration now fell on the minds of all—and the truth was clear as light—and all eyes knew at

once that now indeed they looked on the murderer. The dreadful delusion under which all their understandings had been brought by the power of circumstances, was by that voice destroyed—the obduracy of him who had been about to die was now seen to have been the most heroic virtue—the self-sacrifice of a son to save a father from ignominy and death.

“O monster, beyond the reach of redemption! and the very day after the murder, while the corpse was lying in blood on the Moor, he was with us in the House of God! Tear him in pieces—rend him limb from limb—tear him into a thousand pieces!” “The Evil One had power given him to prevail against me, and I fell under the temptation. It was so written in the Book of Predestination, and the deed lies at the door of God!” “Tear the blasphemer into pieces! Let the scaffold drink his blood!” —“So let it be, if it be so written, good people! Satan never left me since the murder till this day—he sat by my side in the kirk—when I was ploughing in the field—there—ever as I came back from the other end of the furrow—he stood on the headrig—in the shape of a black shadow. But now I see him not—he has returned to his den in the pit. I cannot imagine what I have been doing, or what has been done to me, all the time between the day of trial and this of execution. Was I mad? No matter. But you shall not hang Ludovic—he, poor boy, is innocent;—here, look at him—here—I tell you again—is the Violator and the Murderer!”

But shall the men in authority dare to stay the execution at a maniac’s words? If they dare not—that multitude will, now all rising together like the waves of the sea. “Cut the cords asunder that bind our Ludovic’s arms”—a thousand voices cried; and the murderer, unclasping a knife, that, all unknown to his keepers, he had worn in his breast when a maniac, sheared them asunder as the sickle shears the corn. But his son stirred not—and on being lifted up by his father, gave not so much as a groan. His heart had burst—and he was dead. No one touched the gray-headed murderer, who knelt down—not to pray—but to look into his son’s eyes—and to examine his lips—and to feel his left breast—and to search out all the symptoms of a fainting-fit, or to assure himself—and many a corpse had the plunderer handled on the field after hush of the noise of battle—that this was death. He rose; and standing forward on the edge of the scaffold, said, with a voice that shook not, deep, strong, hollow, and hoarse—“Good people! I am likewise now the murderer of my daughter and of my son! and of myself!” Next moment the knife was in his heart—and he fell down a corpse on the corpse of his Ludovic. All round the sultry horizon the black clouds had for hours been gathering—and now came the thunder and the lightning—and the storm. Again the whole multitude prostrated themselves on the moor—an’ ’he Pastor, bending over the dead bodies, said,

“THIS IS EXPIATION!”

MORNING MONOLOGUE.

"KNOWLEDGE is Power." So is Talent—so is Genius—so is Virtue. Which is the greatest? It might seem hard to tell; but united, they go forth conquering and to conquer. Nor is that union rare. Kindred in nature, they love to dwell together in the same "palace of the soul." Remember Milton. But too often they are disunited; and then, though still Powers, they are but feeble, and their defeats are frequent as their triumphs. What! is it so even with Virtue? It is, and it is not. Virtue may reign without the support of Talent and Genius; but her counsellor is Conscience, and what is Conscience but Reason rich by birthright in knowledge directly derived from the heaven of heavens beyond all the stars?

And may Genius and Talent indeed be, conceive, and execute, without the support of Virtue? You will find that question answered in the following lines by Charles Grant, which deserve the name of philosophical poetry:—

Talents, 'tis true, quick, various, bright, has God
To Virtue oft denied, on Vice bestow'd;
Just as fond Nature loveller colours brings
To deck the insect's than the eagle's wings.
But then of man the high-born nobler part,
The ethereal energies that touch the heart,
Creative Fancy, labouring Thought intense,
Imagination's wild magnificence,
And all the dread sublimities of Song—
These, Virtue! these to thee alone belong.

Such is the natural constitution of humanity; and in the happiest state of social life, all its noblest Faculties would bear legitimate sway, each in its own province, within the spirit's ample domains. There, Genius would be honoured; and Poetry another name for religion. But to such a state there can, under the most favouring skies, be no more than an approximation; and the time never was when Virtue suffered no persecution, Honour no shame, Genius no neglect, nor fetters were not imposed by tyrannous power on the feet of the free. The age of Homer, the age of Solon, the age of Pericles, the age of Numa, the age of Augustus, the age of Alfred, the age of Leo, the age of Elizabeth, the age of Anne, the age of Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron, have they not been all bright and great ages? Yet had they been faithfully chronicled, over the misery and madness of how many despairing spirits fraught with heavenly fire, might we not have been called to pour forth our unavailing indignations and griefs!

Under despotic governments, again, such as have sunk deep their roots into Oriental soils, and beneath Oriental skies prosperously expanded their long-enduring umbrage, where might is right, and submission virtue, noble-minded men—for sake of that peace which is ever dearest to the human heart, and if it descend not a glad and gracious gift from Heaven, will yet not ungratefully be accepted when breathed somewhat sadly from the quieted bosom of earth by tyranny saved from trouble—have submitted, almost without mourning, to

such "many a lovely lay," that perished like the flowers around them, in praise of the Power at whose footstool they "stooped their anointed heads as low as death." Even then has Genius been honoured, because though it ceased to be august, still it was beautiful; it seemed to change fetters of iron into bands of roses, and to halo with a glory the brows of slaves. The wine-cup mantled in its light; and Love forgot in the bower Poetry built for bliss, that the bride might be torn from the bridegroom's bosom on her bridal night by a tyrant's lust. Even there Genius was happy, and diffused happiness; at its bidding was heard pipe, tabor, and dulcimer; and to his lips "Warbling melody" life floated by, in the midst of all oppression, a not undelightful dream!

But how has it been with us in our Green Island of the West? Some people are afraid of revolutions. Heaven pity them! we have had a hundred since the Roman bridged our rivers, and led his highways over our mountains. And what the worse have we been of being thus revolved? We are no radicals; but we dearly love a revolution—like that of the stars. No two nights are the heavens the same—all the luminaries are revolving to the music of their own spheres—look, we beseech you, on that new-risen star. He is elected by universal suffrage—a glorious representative of a million lesser lights; and on dissolution of *that* Parliament—how silent but how eloquent!—he is sure of his return. Why, we should dearly love the late revolution we have seen below—it is no longer called Reform—were it to fling up to free light from fettered darkness a few fine bold original spirits, who might give the whole world a new character, and a more majestic aspect to crouching life. But we look abroad and see strutting to and fro the sons of little men blown up with vanity, in a land where tradition not yet old tells of a race of giants. We are ashamed of ourselves to think we feared the throes of the times, seeing not portentous but pitiable births. Brush these away; and let us think of the great dead—let us look on the great living—and, strong in memory and hope, be confident in the cause of Freedom. "Great men *have been* among us—better none;" and can it be said that *now* there is "a want of books and men," or that those we have, are mere dwarfs and duodecimos? Is there no energy, no spirit of adventure and enterprise, no passion in the character of our country? Has not wide over earth

"England sent her men, of men the chief,
To plant the Tree of Life, to plant fair Freedom's Tree?"

Has not she, the Heart of Europe and the Queen, kindled America into life, and raised up in the New World a power to balance the Old, star steadying star in their unconflicting courses? You can scarce see her shores for ships; her inland groves are crested with towers and temples; and mists brooding at in

tervals over her far-extended plains, tell of towns and cities, their hum unheard by the gazer from her glorious hills. Of such a land it would need a gifted eye to look into all that is passing within the mighty heart; but it needs no gifted eye, no gifted ear, to see and hear there the glare and the groaning of great anguish, as of lurid breakers tumbling in and out of the caves of the sea. But is it or is it not a land where all the faculties of the soul are free as they ever were since the Fall? Grant that there are tremendous abuses in all departments of public and private life; that rulers and legislators have often been as deaf to the "still small voice" as to the cry of the million; that they whom they have ruled, and for whom they have legislated often so unwisely or wickedly, have been as often untrue to themselves, and in self-imposed idolatry

"Have bow'd their knees
To despicable gods;"

Yet base, blind and deaf (and better dumb) must be he who would deny, that here Genius has had, and now has her noblest triumphs; that Poetry has here kindled purer fires on loftier altars than ever sent up their incense to Grecian skies; that Philosophy has sounded depths in which her torch was not extinguished, but, though bright, could pierce not the "heart of the mystery" into which it sent some strong illuminations; that Virtue here has had chosen champions, victorious in their martyrdom; and Religion her ministers and her servants not unworthy of her whose title is from heaven.

Causes there have been, are, and ever will be, why often, even here, the very highest faculties "rot in cold obstruction." But in all the ordinary affairs of life, have not the best the best chance to win the day? Who, in general, achieve competence, wealth, splendour, magnificence, in their condition as citizens? The feeble, the ignorant, and the base, or the strong, the instructed, and the bold? Would you, at the offstart, back mediocrity with alien influence, against high talent with none but its own—the native "might that slumbers in a peasant's arm," or nobler far, that which neither sleeps nor slumbers in a peasant's heart? There is something abhorrent from every sentiment in man's breast to see, as we too often do, imbecility advanced to high places by the mere accident of high birth. But how our hearts warm within us to behold the base-born, if in Britain we may use the word, by virtue of their own irresistible energies, taking precedence, rightful and gladly granted of the blood of kings! Yet we have heard it whispered, insinuated, surmised, spoken, vociferated, howled, and roared in a voice of small-beer-souring thunder, that Church and State, Army and Navy, are all officered by the influence of the Back-stairs—that few or none but blockheads, by means of brass only, mount from the Bar which they have disturbed to that Bench which they disgrace; and that mankind intrust the cure of all diseases their flesh is heir to, to the exclusive care of every here and there a handful of old women.

Whether overstocked or not, 'twould be hard to say, but all professions are full—from that

of Peer to that of Beggar. To live is the most many of us can do. Why then complain? Men should not complain when it is their duty as men to work. Silence need not be sullen—but better sullenness than all this outrageous outcry, as if words the winds scatter, were to drop into the soil and grow up grain. Processions! is this a time for full-grown men in holiday shows to play the part of children? If they desire advancement, let them, like their betters, turn to and work. All men worth mentioning in this country belong to the working classes. What seated Thurlow, and Wedderburne, and Scott, and Erskine, and Copley, and Brougham on the woosack? Work. What made Wellington? For seven years war all over Spain, and finally at Waterloo—work—bloody and glorious work.

Yet still the patriot cry is of sinecures. Let the few sluggards that possess but cannot enjoy them, doze away on them till sinecures and sinecurists drop into the dust. Shall such creatures disturb the equanimity of the magnanimous working-classes of England? True to themselves in life's great relations, they need not grudge, for a little while longer, the paupers a few paltry pence out of their earnings; for they know a sure and silent death-blow has been struck against that order of things by the sense of the land, and that all who receive wages must henceforth give work. All along that has been the rule—these are the exceptions; or say, that has been the law—these are its revolutions. Let there be high rewards, and none grudge them—in honour and gold—for high work. And men of high talents—never extinct—will reach up their hands and seize them, amidst the acclamations of a people who have ever taken pride in a great ambition. If the competition is to be in future more open than ever, to know it is so will rejoice the souls of all who are not slaves. But clear the course! Let not the crowd rush in—for by doing so, they will bring down the racers, and be themselves trampled to death.

Now we say that the race is—if not always—ninety-nine times in a hundred—to the swift, and the battle to the strong. We may have been fortunate in our naval and military friends; but we cannot charge our memory with a single consummate ass holding a distinguished rank in either service. That such consummate asses are in both, we have been credibly informed, and believe it; and we have sometimes almost imagined that we heard their bray at no great distance, and the flapping of their ears. Poor creatures enough do rise by seniority or purchase, or if anybody knows how else, we do not; and such will be the case to the end of the chapter of human accidents. But merit not only makes the man, but the officer on shore and at sea. They are as noble and discontented a set of fellows all, as ever boarded or stormed; and they will continue so, not till some change in the Admiralty, or at the Horseguards, for Sir James Grahame does his duty, and so does Lord Hill; but till a change in humanity, for 'tis no more than Adam did, and we attribute whatever may be amiss or awry, chiefly to the Fall. Let the

radicals set poor human nature on her legs again, and what would become of *them*? In the French service there is no rising at all, it seems, but by merit; but there is also much running away; not in a disgraceful style, for our natural enemies, and artificial friends are a brave race, but in mere indignation and disgust to see troops so shamefully ill-officered as ours, which it would be a disgrace to look in the face on the field, either in column or line. Therefore they never stand a charge, but are off in legions of honour, eagles and all, before troops that have been so uniformly flogged from time immemorial, as to have no other name but raw lobsters, led on by officers all shivering or benumbed under the "cold shade of aristocracy," like Picton and Pack.

We once thought of going ourselves to the English Bar, but were dissuaded from doing so by some judicious friends, who assured us we should only be throwing away our great talents and unexampled eloquence; for that success depended solely on interest, and we had none we knew of, either in high places or in low, and had then never seen an attorney. We wept for the fate of many dear friends in wigs, and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On our return from Palestine and other foreign parts, behold them all bending under briefs, bound by retaining fees, or like game-hawks, wheeling in airy circuits over the rural provinces, and pouncing down on their prey, away to their eyries with talon-fulls, which they devoured at their luxurious leisure, untroubled by any callow young! They now compose the Bench.

Ere we set off for Salem, we had thoughts of entering the Church, and of becoming Bishops. But 'twas necessary, we were told, first to be tutor to a lord. That, in our pride, we could not stomach; but if ours had not been the sin by which Satan fell, where now had been the excellent Howley? All our habits in youth led us to associate much with intending divines. A few of them are still curates; but 'twere vain to try to count the vicars, rectors, canons, deans, archdeacons, and bishops, with whom, when we were all under-graduates together at Oxford, we used to do nothing but read Greek all day, and Latin all night. Yet you hear nothing but abuse of such a Church! and are told to look at the Dissenters. We do look at them, and an uglier set we never saw; not one in a hundred, in his grimness, a gentleman. Not a single scholar have they got to show, and now that Hall is mute, not one orator. Their divinity is of the dust—and their discourses dry bones. Down with the old Universities—up with new. The old are not yet down, but the new are up; and how dazzling the contrast, even to the purblind! You may hew down trees, but not towers; and Granta and Rhedycyna will show their temples to the sun, ages after such structures shall have become hospitals. They enlighten the land. Beloved are they by all the gentlemen of England. Even the plucked think of them with tears of filial reverence, and having renewed their plumage, clap their wings and crow defiance to all their foes. A man, you say, can get there no education to

fit him for life. Bah! Tell that to the marines. Now and then one meets a man eminent in a liberal profession, who has not been at any place that could easily be called a College. But the great streams of talent in England keep perpetually flowing from the gates of her glorious Universities—and he who would deny it in any mixed company of leading men in London, would only have to open his eyes in the hush that rebuked his folly, to see that he was a Cockney, clever enough, perhaps, in his own small way, and the author of some sonnets, but even to his own feelings painfully out of place among men who had not studied at the Surrey.

We cannot say that we have any fears, this fine clear September morning, for the Church of England in Ireland. In Ireland, deserted and betrayed, it has received a dilapidating shock. Fain would seven millions of "the finest people on the earth," and likewise the most infatuated, who are so proud of the verdure of their isle, that they love to make "the green one red," see the entire edifice overthrown, not one stone left upon another, and its very name smothered in a smoky cloud of ascending dust. They have told us so in yells, over which has still been heard "the wolf's long howl," the savage cry of the O'Connell. And Ministers who pretend to be Protestants, and in reform have not yet declared against the Reformation, have tamely yielded, recreants from the truth, to brawlers who would pull down her holiest altars, and given up "pure religion, breathing household laws," a sacrifice to superstition. But there is a power enshrined in England which no Government dare seek to desecrate—in the hearts of the good and wise, grateful to an establishment that has guarded Christianity from corruption, and is venerated by all the most enlightened spirits who conscientiously worship without its pale, and know that in the peaceful shadow of its strength repose their own humbler and untroubled altars.

We have been taking a cheerful—a hopeful view of our surrounding world, as it is inclosed within these our seas, whose ideal murmur seemed awhile to breathe in unison with our Monologue. We have been believing, that in this our native land, the road of merit is the road to success—say happiness. And is not the law the same in the world of Literature and the Fine Arts? Give a great genius any thing like fair play, and he will gain glory, nay bread. True, he may be before his age, and may have to create his worshippers. But how few such! And is it a disgrace to an age to produce a genius whose grandeur it cannot all at once comprehend? The works of genius are surely not often incomprehensible to the highest contemporary minds, and if they win their admiration, pity not the poor Poet. But pray syllable the living Poet's name who has had reason to complain of having fallen on evil days, or who is with "darkness and with danger compassed round." From humblest birth-places in the obscurest nooks frequently have we seen.

"The fulgent head
Star-bright appear;"

from unsuspected rest among the water-lilies of the mountain-mere, the snow-white swan in full plumage soar into the sky. Hush! no nonsense about Wordsworth. "Far-off his coming shone;" and what if, for a while, men knew not whether 'twas some mirage-glimmer, or the dawning of a new "orb of song!"

We have heard rather too much even from that great poet about the deafness and blindness of the present time. No Time but the future, he avers, has ears or eyes for divine music and light. Was Homer in his own day obscure, or Shakspeare? But Heaven forbid we should force the bard into an argument; we allow him to sit undisturbed by us in the bower nature delighted to build for him, with small help from his own hands, at the dim end of that alley green, among lake-murmur and mountain-shadow, for ever haunted by ennobling visions. But we love and respect present Time—partly, we confess, because he has shown some little kindly feeling for ourselves, whereas we fear Future Time may forget us among many others of his worthy father's friends, and the name of Christopher North

"Die on his ears a faint unheeded sound."

But Present Time has not been unjust to William Wordsworth. Some small temporalities were so; imps running about the feet of Present Time, and sometimes making him stumble: but on raising his eyes from the ground, he saw something shining like an Apparition on the mountain top, and he hailed, and with a friendly voice, the advent of another true Poet of nature and of man.

We must know how to read that prophet, before we preach from any text in his book of revelations.

"We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness."

Why spoke he thus? Because a deep darkness had fallen upon him all alone in a mountain-cave, and he quaked before the mystery of man's troubled life.

"He thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perish'd in his pride;
Of him who walk'd in glory and in joy,
Following his plough upon the mountain side;"

and if they died miserably, "How may I perish!" But they wanted wisdom. Therefore the marvellous boy drank one bowl drugged with sudden, and the glorious ploughman many bowls drugged with lingering death. If we must weep over the woes of Genius, let us know for whom we may rightly shed our tears. With one drop of ink you may write the names of all

"The mighty Poets in their misery dead."

Wordsworth wrote those lines, as we said, in the inspiration of a profound but not permanent melancholy; and they must not be profaned by being used as a quotation in defence of accusations against human society, which, in some lips, become accusations against Providence. The mighty Poets have been not only wiser, but happier than they knew; and what glory from heaven and earth was poured over their inward life, up to the very moment it darkened away into the gloom of the grave!

Many a sad and serious hour have we read D'Israeli, and many a lesson may all lovers of literature learn from his well-instructed books. But from the unhappy stories therein so feelingly and eloquently narrated, has many "a famous ape" drawn conclusions the very reverse of those which he himself leaves to be drawn by all minds possessed of any philosophy. Melancholy the moral of these moving tales; but we must look for it, not into the society that surrounds us, though on it too we must keep a watchful, and, in spite of all its sins, a not irreverent eye, but into our own hearts. There lies the source of evil which some evil power perhaps without us stirs up till it wells over in misery. Then fiercely turns the wretch first against "the world and the world's law," both sometimes iniquitous, and last of all against the rebellious spirit in his own breast, but for whose own innate corruption his moral being would have been victorious against all outward assaults, violent or insidious, "and to the end persisting safe arrived."

Many men of genius have died without their fame, and for their fate we may surely mourn, without calumniating our kind. It was their lot to die. Such was the will of God. Many such have come and gone, ere they knew themselves what they were; their brothers, and sisters, and friends knew it not; knew it not their fathers and mothers; nor the village maidens on whose bosoms they laid their dying heads. Many, conscious of the divine flame, and visited by mysterious stirrings that would not let them rest, have like vernal wild-flowers withered, or been cut down like young trees in the season of leaf and blossom. Of this our mortal life what are these but beautiful evanishings! Such was our young Scottish Poet, Michael Bruce—a fine scholar, who taught a little wayside school, and died, a mere lad, of consumption. Loch Leven Castle, where Mary Stuart was imprisoned, looks not more melancholy among the dim waters for her than for its own Poet's sake! The linnet, in its joy among the yellow broom, sings not more sweetly than did he in his sadness, sitting beside his unopened grave, "one song that will not die," though the dirge but draw now and then a tear from some simple heart.

"Now spring returns—but not to me returns

The vernal joy my better years have known;

Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,

And all the joys of life with health are flown."

To young Genius to die is often a great gain. The green leaf was almost hidden in blossoms, and the tree put forth beautiful promise. Cold winds blew, and clouds intercepted the sunshine; but it felt the dews of heaven, and kept flourishing fair even in the moonlight, deriving sweet sustenance from the stars. But would all those blossoms have been fruit? Many would have formed, but more perhaps dropt in unperceived decay, and the tree which "all eyes that looked on loved," might not have been the pride of the garden. Death could not permit the chance of such disappointment, stepped kindly in, and let the spring-dream "sweet but mournful to the soul," among its half-fancied memories. Such was

the fate, perhaps, of Henry Kirke White. His fine moral and intellectual being was not left to pine away neglected; and if, in gratitude and ambition, twin-births in that noble heart, he laid down his life for sake of the lore he loved, let us lament the dead with no passionate ejaculations over injustice by none committed, console ourselves with the thought, in noways unkind to his merits, that he died in a mild bright spring that might have been succeeded by no very glorious summer; and that, fading away as he did among the tears of the good and great, his memory has been embalmed, not only in his own gentle inspirations, but in the immortal eulogy of Southey. But, alas! many thus endowed by nature "have waged with fortune an unequal war;" and pining away in poverty and disappointment, have died broken-hearted—and been buried—some in unhonoured—some even in unwept graves! And how many have had a far more dismal lot, because their life was not so innocent! The children of misfortune, but of error too—of frailty, vice, and sin. Once gone astray, with much to tempt them on, and no voice, no hand, to draw them back, theirs has been at first a flowery descent to death, but soon sorely beset with thorns, lacerating the friendless wretches, till, with shame and remorse their sole attendants, they have tottered into unconfined holes and found peace.

With sorrows and sufferings like these, it would be hardly fair to blame society at large for having little or no sympathy; for they are, in the most affecting cases, borne in silence, and are unknown even to the generous and humane in their own neighbourhood, who might have done something or much to afford encouragement or relief. Nor has Charity always neglected those who so well deserved her open hand, and in their virtuous poverty might, without abatement of honourable pride in themselves, have accepted silent succour to silent distress. Pity that her blessings should be so often intercepted by worthless applicants, on their way, it may be said, to the magnanimous who have not applied at all, but spoken to her heart in a silent language, which was not meant even to express the penury it betrayed. But we shall never believe that dew twice blessed seldom descends, in such a land as ours, on the noble young head that else had sunk like a chance flower in some dank shade, left to wither among weeds. We almost venture to say, that much of such unpitied, because often unsuspected suffering, cannot cease to be without a change in the moral government of the world.

Nor has Genius a right to claim from Conscience what is due but to Virtue. None who love humanity can wish to speak harshly of its mere frailties or errors—but none who revere morality can allow privilege to its sins. All who sin suffer, with or without genius; and we are nowhere taught in the New Testament, that remorse in its agony, and penitence in its sorrow, visit men's imaginations only; but whatever way they enter, their rueful dwelling is in the heart. Poets shed no bitterer tears than ordinary men; and Fonblanque finely showed us, in one of his late

little essays, clear as wells and deep as tarns, that so far from their being any thing in the constitution of genius naturally kindred either to vice or misery, it is framed of light and love and happiness, and that its sins and sufferings come not from the spirit but from the flesh. Yet is its flesh as firm, and perhaps somewhat finer than that of the common clay; but still it is clay—for all men are dust.

But what if they who, on the ground of genius, claim exemption from our blame, and inclusion within our sympathies, even when seen suffering from their own sins, have no genius at all, but are mere ordinary men, and but for the fumes of some physical excitement, which they mistake for the airs of inspiration, are absolutely stupider than people generally go, and even without any tolerable abilities for alphabetical education? Many such run versifying about, and will not try to settle down into an easy sedentary trade, till getting thirsty through perpetual perspiration, they take to drinking, come to you with subscription-papers for poetry, with a cock in their eye that tells of low tippling houses, and, accepting your half-crown, slander you when melting it in the purling purlieus of their own donkey-browsed Parnassus.

Can this age be fairly charged—we speak of England and Scotland—with a shameful indifference—or worse—a cruel scorn—or worse still—a barbarous persecution of young persons of humble birth, in whom there may appear a promise of talent, or of genius? Many are the scholars in whom their early benefactors have had reason to be proud of themselves, while they have been happy to send their sons to be instructed in the noblest lore, by men whose boyhood they had rescued from the darkness of despair, and clothed it with the warmth and light of hope. And were we to speak of endowments in schools and colleges, in which so many fine scholars have been brought up from among the humbler classes, who but for them had been bred to some mean handicraft, we should show better reason still for believing that moral and intellectual worth is not overlooked, or left to pine neglected in obscure places, as it is too much the fashion with a certain set of discontented declaimers to give out; but that in no other country has such provision been made for the meritorious children of the enlightened poor as in England. But we fear that the talent and the genius which, according to them, have been so often left or sent to beggary, to the great reproach even of our national character, have not been of a kind which a thoughtful humanity would in its benefactions have recognised; for it looks not with very hopeful eyes on mere irregular sallies of fancy, least of all when spurning prudence and propriety, and symptomatic of a mental constitution easily excited, but averse to labour, and insensible to the delight labour brings with it, when the faculties are all devoted in steadfastness of purpose to the acquisition of knowledge and the attainment of truth.

'Tis not easy to know, seeing it so difficult to define it, whether this or that youth who thinks he has genius, has it or not; the only

proof he may have given of it is perhaps a few copies of verses, which breathe the animal gladness of young life, and are tinged with tints of the beautiful, which joy itself, more imaginative than it ever again will be, steals from the sunset; but sound sense, and judgment, and taste, which is sense and judgment of all finest feelings and thoughts, and the love of light dawning on the intellect, and ability to gather into knowledge facts near and from afar, till the mind sees systems, and in them understands the phenomena which, when looked at singly, perplexed the pleasure of the sight—these, and aptitudes and capacities and powers such as these, are indeed of promise, and more than promise; they are already performance, and justify in minds thus gifted, and in those who watch their workings, hopes of a wiser and happier future when the boy shall be a man.

Perhaps too much honour, rather than too little, has been shown by his age to mediocre poetry and other works of fiction. A few gleams of genius have given some writers of little worth a considerable reputation; and great waxed the pride of poetasters. But true poetry burst in beauty over the land, and we became intolerant of "false glitter." Fresh sprang its flowers from the "dædal earth," or seemed, they were so surpassingly beautiful, as if spring had indeed descended from heaven, "veiled in a shower of shadowing roses," and no longer could we suffer young gentlemen and ladies, treading among the profusion, to gather the glorious scatterings, and weaving them into fantastic or even tasteful garlands, to present them to us, as if they had been raised from the seed of their own genius, and entitled therefore "to bear their name in the wild woods." This flower-gathering, pretty pastime though it be, and altogether innocent, fell into disrepute; and then all such florists began to complain of being neglected, or despised, or persecuted, and their friends to lament over their fate, the fate of all genius, "in amorous ditties all a summer's day."

Besides the living poets of highest rank, are there not many whose claims to join the sacred band have been allowed, because their lips, too, have sometimes been touched with a fire from heaven? Second-rate indeed! Ay, well for those who are third, fourth, or fifth-rate—knowing where sit Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton. Round about Parnassus run many parallel roads, with forests "of cedar and branching palm between," overshadowing the sunshine on each magnificent level with a sense of something more sublime still nearer the forked summit; and each band, so that they be not ambitious overmuch, in their own region may wander or repose in grateful bliss. Thousands look up with envy from "the low-lying fields of the beautiful land" immediately without the line that goes wavingly asweep round the base of the holy mountain, separating it from the common earth. What clamour and what din from the excluded crowd! Many are heard there to whom nature has been kind, but they have not yet learned "to know themselves," or they would retire, but not afar off, and in silence adore. And so they do erelong,

and are happy in the sight of "the beauty still more beauteous" revealed to their fine perceptions, though to them was not given the faculty that by combining in spiritual passion creates. But what has thither brought the self-deceived, who will not be convinced of their delusion, even were Homer or Milton's very self to frown on them with eyes no longer dim, but angry in their brightness like lowering stars?

But we must beware—perhaps too late—of growing unintelligible, and ask you, in plainer terms, if you do not think that by far the greatest number of all those who raise an outcry against the injustice of the world to men of genius, are persons of the meanest abilities, who have all their lives been foolishly fighting with their stars? Their demons have not whispered to them "have a taste," but "you have genius," and the world gives the demons the lie. Thence anger, spite, rancour, and envy eat their hearts, and they "rail against the Lord's anointed." They set up idols of clay, and fall down and worship them—or idols of brass, more worthless than clay; or they perversely, and in hatred, not in love, pretend reverence for the Fair and Good, because, forsooth, placed by man's ingratitude too far in the shade, whereas man's pity has, in deep compassion, removed the objects of their love, because of their imperfections not blameless, back in among that veiling shade, that their beauty might still be visible, while their deformities were hidden in "a dim religious light."

Let none of the sons or daughters of genius hearken to such outcry but with contempt—and at all times with suspicion, when they find themselves the objects of such lamentations. The world is not—at least does not wish to be, an unkind, ungenerous, and unjust world. Many who think themselves neglected, are far more thought of than they suppose; just as many, who imagine the world ringing with their name, are in the world's ears nearly anonymous. Only one edition or two of your poems have sold—but is it not pretty well that five hundred or a thousand copies have been read, or glanced over, or looked at, or skimmed, or skipped, or foulded, or petted, or tossed aside, "between malice and true love," by ten times that number of your fellow-creatures, not one of whom ever saw your face; while many millions of men, nearly your equals, and not a few millions your superiors far, have contentedly dropt into the grave, at the close of a long life, without having once "invoked the Muse," and who would have laughed in your face had you talked to them, even in their greatest glee, about their genius.

There is a glen in the Highlands (dearly beloved Southrons, call on us, on your way through Edinburgh, and we shall delight to instruct you how to walk our mountains) called Glencro—very unlike Glenco. A good road winds up the steep ascent, and at the summit there is a stone seat, on which you read, "*Rest and be thankful.*" You do so—and are not a little proud—if pedestrians—of your achievement. Looking up, you see cliffs high above your head, (not the Cobbler), and in the clear sky, as far above them, a balanced bird.

You envy him his seemingly motionless wings, and wonder at his air-supporters. Down he darts, or aside he shoots, or right up he soars, and you wish you were an Eagle. You have reached Rest-and-be-thankful, yet rest you will not, and thankful you will not be, and you scorn the mean inscription, which many a worthier wayfarer has blessed, while sitting on that stone he has said, "give us this day our daily bread," eat his crust, and then walked away contented down to Cairndow. Just so it has been with you sitting at your appointed place—pretty high up—on the road to the summit of the Biforked Hill. You look up and see Byron—there "sitting where you may not

soar,"—and wish you were a great Poet. But you are no more a great Poet than an Eagle eight feet from wing-tip to wing-tip—and will not rest-and-be-thankful that you are a man and a Christian. Nay, you are more, an author of no mean repute; and your prose is allowed to be excellent, better far than the best paragraph in this our Morning Monologue. But you are sick of walking, and nothing will satisfy you but to fly. Be contented, as we are, with feet, and weep not for wings; and let us take comfort together from a cheering quotation from the philosophic Gray—

"For they that creep, and they that fly,
Just end where they began."

THE FIELD OF FLOWERS.

A MAY-MORNING on Ulswater and the banks of Ulswater—commingled earth and heaven! Spring is many-coloured as Autumn; but now Joy scatters the hues daily brightening into greener life, then Melancholy dropt them daily dimming into yellower death. The fear of Winter then—but now the hope of Summer; and Nature rings with hymns hailing the visible advent of the perfect year. If for a moment the woods are silent, it is but to burst forth anew into louder song. The rain is over and gone—but the showery sky speaks in the streams on a hundred hills; and the wide mountain gloom opens its heart to the sunshine, that on many a dripping precipice burns like fire. Nothing seems inanimate. The very clouds and their shadows look alive—the trees, never dead, are wide-awakened from their sleep—families of flowers are frequenting all the dewy places—old walls are splendid with the light of lichens—and birch-crowned cliffs up among the coves send down their fine fragrance to the Lake on every bolder breath that whitens with breaking wavelets the blue of its breezy bosom. Nor mute the voice of man. The shepherd is whooping on the hill—the ploughman calling to his team somewhere among the furrows in some small late field, won from the woods; and you hear the laughter and the echoes of the laughter—one sound—of children busied in half-work, half-play; for what else in vernal sunshine is the occupation of young rustic life? 'Tis no Arcadia—no golden age. But a lovelier scene—in the midst of all its grandeur—is not in merry and majestic England; nor did the hills of this earth ever circumscribe a pleasanter dwelling for a nobler peasantry, than these Cumbrian ranges of rocks and pastures, where the raven croaks in his own region, unregarded in theirs by the fleecy flocks. How beautiful the Church Tower!

On a knoll not far from the shore, and not high above the water, yet by an especial felicity of place gently commanding all that reach

of the Lake with all its ranges of mountains—every single tree, every grove, and all the woods seeming to show or to conceal the scene at the bidding of the Spirit of Beauty—reclined two Figures—the one almost rustic, but venerable in the simplicity of old age—the other no longer young, but still in the prime of life—and though plainly apparelled, with form and bearing such as are pointed out in cities, because belonging to distinguished men. The old man behaved towards him with deference but not humility; and between them too—in many things unlike—it was clear even from their silence that there was Friendship.

A little way off, and sometimes almost running, now up and now down the slopes and hollows, was a girl about eight years old—whether beautiful or not you could not know, for her face was either half-hidden in golden hair, or when she tossed the tresses from her brow, it was so bright in the sunshine that you saw no features, only a gleam of joy. Now she was chasing the butterflies, not to hurt them, but to get a nearer sight of their delicate gauze wings—the first that had come—she wondered whence—to waver and wanton for a little while in the spring-sunshine, and then, she felt, as wondrously, one and all as by consent, to vanish. And now she stooped as if to pull some little wild-flower, her hand for a moment withheld by a loving sense of its loveliness, but ever and anon adding some new colour to the blended bloom intended to gladden her father's eyes—though the happy child knew full well, and sometimes wept to know, that she herself had his entire heart. Yet gliding, or tripping, or dancing along, she touched not with fairy foot one white clover-flower on which she saw working the silent bee. Her father looked too often sad, and she feared—though what it was, she imagined not even in dreams—that some great misery must have befallen him before they came to live in the glen. And such, too, she had heard from a chance whisper, was the belief of their neigh

bours. But momentary the shadows on the light of childhood! Nor was she insensible to her own beauty, that with the innocence it enshrined combined to make her happy; and first met her own eyes every morning, when most beautiful, awakening from the hushed awe of her prayers. She was clad in russet, like a cottager's child; but her air spoke of finer breeding than may be met with among those mountains—though natural grace accompanies there many a maiden going with her pitcher to the well—and gentle blood and old flows there in the veins of now humble men—who, but for the decay of families once high, might have lived in halls, now dilapidated, and scarcely distinguished through masses of ivy from the circumjacent rocks!

The child stole close behind her father, and kissing his cheek, said, "Were there ever such lovely flowers seen on Ulswater before, father? I do not believe that they will ever die." And she put them in his breast. Not a smile came to his countenance—no look of love—no faint recognition—no gratitude for the gift which at other times might haply have drawn a tear. She stood abashed in the sternness of his eyes, which, though fixed on her, seemed to see her not; and feeling that her glee was mistimed—for with such gloom she was not unfamiliar—the child felt as if her own happiness had been sin, and, retiring into a glade among the broom, sat down and wept.

"Poor wretch, better far that she never had been born!"

The old man looked on his friend with compassion, but with no surprise; and only said, "God will dry up her tears."

These few simple words, uttered in a solemn voice, but without one tone of reproach, seemed somewhat to calm the other's trouble, who first looking towards the spot where his child was sobbing to herself, though he heard it not, and then looking up to heaven, ejaculated for her sake a broken prayer. He then would have fain called her to him; but he was ashamed that even she should see him in such a passion of grief—and the old man went to her of his own accord, and bade her, as from her father, again to take her pastime among the flowers. Soon was she dancing in her happiness as before; and, that her father might hear she was obeying him, singing a song.

"For five years every Sabbath have I attended divine service in your chapel—yet dare I not call myself a Christian. I have prayed for faith—nor, wretch that I am, am I an unbeliever. But I fear to fling myself at the foot of the cross. God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The old man opened not his lips; for he felt that there was about to be made some confession. Yet he doubted not that the sufferer had been more sinned against than sinning; for the goodness of the stranger—so called still after five years' residence among the mountains—was known in many a vale—and the Pastor knew that charity covereth a multitude of sins—and even as a moral virtue prepares the heart for heaven. So sacred a thing is solace in this woful world.

"We have walked together, many hundred

times, for great part of a day, by ourselves two, over long tracts of uninhabited moors, and yet never once from my lips escaped one word about my fates or fortunes—so frozen was the secret in my heart. Often have I heard the sound of your voice, as if it were that of the idle wind; and often the words I did hear seemed, in the confusion, to have no relation to us, to be strange syllabings in the wilderness, as from the hauntings of some evil spirit instigating me to self-destruction."

"I saw that your life was oppressed by some perpetual burden; but God darkened not your mind while your heart was disturbed so grievously; and well pleased were we all to think, that in caring so kindly for the griefs of others, you might come at last to forget your own; or if that were impossible, to feel, that with the alleviations of time, and sympathy, and religion, yours was no more than the common lot of sorrow."

They rose—and continued to walk in silence—but not apart—and down that small silvan enclosure overlooked but by rocks. The child saw her father's distraction—no unusual sight to her; yet on each recurrence as mournful and full of fear as if seen for the first time—and pretended to be playing aloof with her face pale in tears.

"That child's mother is not dead. Where she is now I know not—perhaps in a foreign country hiding her guilt and her shame. All say that a lovelier child was never seen than that wretch—God bless her—how beautiful is the poor creature now in her happiness singing over her flowers! Just such another must her mother have been at her age. She is now an outcast—and an adulteress."

The pastor turned away his face, for in the silence he heard groans, and the hollow voice again spoke:—

"Through many dismal days and nights have I striven to forgive her, but never for many hours together have I been enabled to repent my curse. For on my knees I implored God to curse her—her head—her eyes—her breast—her body—mind, heart, and soul—and that she might go down a loathsome leper to the grave."

"Remember what He said to the woman—'Go, and sin no more!'"

"The words have haunted me all up and down the hills—his words and mine; but mine have always sounded liker justice at last—for my nature was created human—and human are all the passions that pronounced that holy or unholy curse!"

"Yet you would not curse her now—were she laying here at your feet—or if you were standing by her death-bed?"

"Lying here at my feet! Even here—on this very spot—not blasted, but green through all the year—within the shelter of these two rocks—she did lie at my feet in her beauty—and as I thought her innocence—my own happy bride! Hither I brought her to be blest—and blest I was even up to the measure of my misery. This world is hell to me now—but then it was heaven!"

"These awful names are of the mysteries beyond the grave."

"Hear me and judge. She was an orphan; all her father's and mother's relations were dead, but a few who were very poor. I married her, and secured her life against this heartless and wicked world. That child was born—and while it grew like a flower—she left it—and its father—we who loved her beyond light and life, and would have given up both for her sake."

"And have not yet found heart to forgive her—miserable as she needs must be—seeing she has been a great sinner!"

"Who forgives? The father his profligate son, or disobedient daughter? No; he disinherits his first-born, and suffers him to perish, perhaps by an ignominious death. He leaves his only daughter to drag out her days in penury—a widow with orphans. The world may condemn, but is silent; he goes to church every Sabbath, but no preacher denounces punishment on the unrelenting, the unforgiving parent. Yet how easily might he have taken them both back to his heart, and loved them better than ever! But she poisoned my cup of life when it seemed to overflow with heaven. Had God dashed it from my lips, I could have borne my doom. But with her own hand which I had clasped at the altar—and with our Lucy at her knees—she gave me that loathsome draught of shame and sorrow;—I drank it to the dregs—and it is burning all through my being—now—as if it had been hell-fire from the hands of a fiend in the shape of an angel. In what page of the New Testament am I told to forgive her? Let me see the verse—and then shall I know that Christianity is an imposture; for the voice of God within me—the conscience which is his still small voice—commands me never from my memory to obliterate that curse—never to forgive her, and her wickedness—not even if we should see each other's shadows in a future state, after the day of judgment."

His countenance grew ghastly—and staggering to a stone, he sat down and eyed the skies with a vacant stare, like a man whom dreams carry about in his sleep. His face was like ashes—and he gasped like one about to fall into a fit. "Bring me water"—and the old man motioned to the child, who, giving ear to him for a moment, flew away to the Lake-side with an urn she had brought with her for flowers; and held it to her father's lips. His eyes saw it not;—there was her sweet pale face all wet with tears, almost touching his own—her innocent mouth breathing that pure balm that seems to a father's soul to be inhaled from the bowers of paradise. He took her into his bosom—and kissed her dewy eyes—and begged her to cease her sobbing—to smile—to laugh—to sing—to dance away into the sunshine—to be happy! And Lucy afraid, not of her father, but of his kindness—for the simple creature was not able to understand his wild utterance of blessings—returned to the glade but not to her pastime, and couching like a fawn among the fern, kept her eyes on her father, and left her flowers to fade unheeded beside her empty urn.

"Unintelligible mystery of wickedness! That child was just three years old the very

day it was forsaken—she abandoned it and me on its birth-day! Twice had that day been observed by us—as the sweetest—the most sacred of holydays; and now that it had again come round—but I not present—for I was on foreign service—thus did she observe it—and disappeared with her paramour. It so happened that we went that day into action—and I committed her and our child to the mercy of God in fervent prayers; for love made me religious—and for their sakes I feared though I shunned not death. I lay all night among the wounded on the field of battle—and it was a severe frost. Pain kept me from sleep, but I saw them as distinctly as in a dream—the mother lying with her child in her bosom in our own bed. Was not that vision mockery enough to drive me mad? After a few weeks a letter came to me from herself—and I kissed it and pressed it to my heart; for no black seal was there—and I knew that little Lucy was alive. No meaning for a while seemed to be in the words—and then they began to blacken into ghastly characters—till at last I gathered from the horrid revelation that she was sunk in sin and shame, steeped for evermore in utmost pollution.

"A friend was with me—and I gave it to him to read—for in my anguish at first I felt no shame—and I watched his face as he read it, that I might see corroboration of the incredible truth, which continued to look like falsehood, even while it pierced my heart with agonizing pangs. 'It may be a forgery,' was all he could utter—after long agitation; but the shape of each letter was too familiar to my eyes—the way in which the paper was folded—and I knew my doom was sealed. Hours must have passed, for the room grew dark—and I asked him to leave me for the night. He kissed my forehead—for we had been as brothers. I saw him next morning—dead—cut nearly in two—yet had he left a paper for me, written an hour before he fell, so filled with holiest friendship, that oh! how even in my agony I wept for him, now but a lump of cold clay and blood, and envied him at the same time a soldier's grave!"

"And has the time indeed come that I can thus speak calmly of all that horror! The body was brought into my room, and it lay all day and all night close to my bed. But false was I to all our life-long friendship—and almost with indifference I looked upon the corpse. Momentary starts of affection seized me—but I cared little or nothing for the death of him, the tender and the true, the gentle and the brave, the pious and the noble-hearted; my anguish was all for her, the cruel and the faithless, dead to honour, to religion dead—dead to all the sanctities of nature—for her, and for her alone, I suffered all ghastliest agonies—nor any comfort came to me in my despair, from the conviction that she was worthless; for desperately wicked as she had shown herself to be—oh! crowding came back upon me all our hours of happiness—all her sweet smiles—all her loving looks—all her affectionate words—all her conjugal and maternal tendernesses; and the loss of

all that bliss—the change of it all into strange, sudden, shameful, and everlasting misery, smote me till I swooned, and was delivered up to a trance in which the rueful reality was mixed up with fantasms more horrible than man's mind can suffer out of the hell of sleep!

"Wretched coward that I was to outlive that night! But my mind was weak from great loss of blood—and the blow so stunned me that I had not strength of resolution to die. I might have torn off the bandages—for nobody watched me—and my wounds were thought mortal. But the love of life had not welled out with all those vital streams; and as I began to recover, another passion took possession of me—and I vowed that there should be atonement and revenge. I was not obscure. My dishonour was known through the whole army. Not a tent—not a hut—in which my name was not bandied about—a jest in the mouths of profligate poltroons—pronounced with pity by the compassionate brave. I had commanded my men with pride. No need had I ever had to be ashamed when I looked on our colours; but no wretch led out to execution for desertion or cowardice ever shrunk from the sun, and from the sight of human faces arrayed around him, with more shame and horror than did I when, on my way to a transport, I came suddenly on my own corps, marching to music as if they were taking up a position in the line of battle—as they had often done with me at their head—all sternly silent before an approaching storm of fire. What brought them there? To do me honour! Me, smeared with infamy, and ashamed to lift my eyes from the mire. Honour had been the idol I worshipped—alas! too, too passionately far—and now I lay in my litter like a slave sold to stripes—and heard as if a legion of demons were mocking me and with loud and long huzzas; and then a confused murmur of blessings on our noble commander, so they called me—me, despicable in my own esteem—scorned—insulted—forsaken—me, who could not bind to mine the bosom that for years had touched it—a wretch so poor in power over a woman's heart, that no sooner had I left her to her own thoughts than she felt that she had never loved me, and, opening her fair breast to a new-born bliss, sacrificed me without remorse—nor could bear to think of me any more as her husband—not even for sake of that child whom I knew she loved—for no hypocrite was she there; and oh! lost creature though she was—even now I wonder over that unaccountable desertion—and much she must have suffered from the image of that small bed, beside which she used to sit for hours, perfectly happy from the sight of that face which I too so often blessed in her hearing, because it was so like her own! Where is my child! Have I frightened her away into the wood by my unfatherly looks? She too will come to hate me—oh! see yonder her face and her figure like a fairy's, gliding through among the broom! Sorrow has no business with her—nor she with sorrow. Yet—even her how often have I made weep! All the unhappiness she has ever known has all come from me; and would

I but leave her alone to herself in her affectionate innocence, the smile that always lies on her face when she is asleep would remain there—only brighter—all the time her eyes are awake; but I dash it away by my unhalloed harshness, and people looking on her in her trouble, wonder to think how sad can be the countenance even of a little child. O God of mercy! what if she were to die!"

"She will not die—she will live," said the pitying pastor—"and many happy years—my son—are yet in store even for you—sorely as you have been tried; for it is not in nature that your wretchedness can endure for ever. She is in herself all-sufficient for a father's happiness. You prayed just now that the God of Mercy would spare her life—and has he not spared it? Tender flower as she seems, yet how full of Life! Let not then your gratitude to Heaven be barren in your heart; but let it produce there resignation—if need be, contrition—and, above all, forgiveness."

"Yes! I had a hope to live for—mangled as I was in body, and racked in mind—a hope that was a faith—and bitter-sweet it was in imagined foretaste of fruition—the hope and the faith of revenge. They said he would not aim at my life. But what was that to me who thirsted for his blood? Was he to escape death, because he dared not wound bone, or flesh, or muscle of mine, seeing that the assassin had already stabbed my soul? Satisfaction! I tell you that I was for revenge. Not that his blood could wipe out the stain with which my name was imbrued, but let it be mixed with the mould; and he who invaded my marriage-bed—and hallowed was it by every generous passion that ever breathed upon woman's breast—let him fall down in convulsions, and vomit out his heart's blood, at once in expiation of his guilt, and in retribution dealt out to him by the hand of him whom he had degraded in the eyes of the whole world beneath the condition even of a felon, and delivered over in my misery to contempt and scorn. I found him out;—there he was before me—in all that beauty by women so beloved—graceful as Apollo; and with a haughty air, as if proud of an achievement that adorned his name, he saluted me—*her husband*—on the field,—and let the wind play with his raven tresses—his curled love-locks—and then presented himself to my aim in an attitude a statuary would have admired. I shot him through the heart."

The good old man heard the dreadful words with a shudder—yet they had come to his ears not unexpectedly, for the speaker's aspect had gradually been growing black with wrath, long before he ended in an avowal of murder. Nor, on ceasing his wild words and distracted demeanour, did it seem that his heart was touched with any remorse. His eyes retained their savage glare—his teeth were clenched—and he feasted on his crime.

"Nothing but a full faith in Divine Revelation," solemnly said his aged friend, "can subdue the evil passions of our nature, or enable conscience itself to see and repent of sin. Your wrongs were indeed great—but without a change wrought in all your spirit, alas! my

son! you cannot hope to see the kingdom of heaven."

"Who dares to condemn the deed? He deserved death—and whence was doom to come but from me the Avenger? I took his life—but once I saved it. I bore him from the battlements of a fort stormed in vain—after we had all been blown up by the springing of a mine; and from bayonets that had drunk my blood as well as his—and his widowed mother blessed me as the saviour of her son. I told my wife to receive him as a brother—and for my sake to feel towards him a sister's love. Who shall speak of temptation—or frailty—or infatuation to me? Let the fools hold their peace. His wounds became dearer to her abandoned heart than mine had ever been; yet had her cheek lain many a night on the scars that seamed this breast—for I was not backward in battle, and our place was in the van. I was no coward, that she who loved heroism in him should have dishonoured her husband. True, he was younger by some years than me—and God had given him pernicious beauty—and she was young, too—oh! the brightest of all mortal creatures the day she became my bride—nor less bright with that baby at her bosom—a matron in girlhood's resplendent spring! Is youth a plea for wickedness? And was I old? I, who in spite of all I have suffered, feel the vital blood yet boiling as to a furnace; but cut off for ever by her crime from fame and glory—and from a soldier in his proud career, covered with honour in the eyes of all my countrymen, changed in an hour into an outlawed and nameless slave. My name has been borne by a race of heroes—the blood in my veins has flowed down a long line of illustrious ancestors—and here am I now—a hidden, disguised hypocrite—dwelling among peasants—and afraid—ay, afraid, because ashamed, to lift my eyes freely from the ground even among the solitudes of the mountains, lest some wandering stranger should recognise me, and see the brand of ignominy her hand and his—accursed both—burnt in upon my brow. She forsook this bosom—but tell me if it was in disgust with these my scars?"

And as he bared it, distractedly, that noble chest was seen indeed disfigured with many a gash—on which a wife might well have rested her head with gratitude not less devout because of a lofty pride mingling with life-deep affection. But the burst of passion was gone by—and, covering his face with his hands, he wept like a child.

"Oh! cruel—cruel was her conduct to me; yet what has mine been to her—for so many years! I could not tear her image from my memory—not an hour has it ceased to haunt me; since I came among these mountains, her ghost is for ever at my side. I have striven to drive it away with curses, but still there is the phantom. Sometimes—beautiful as on our marriage day—all in purest white—adorned with flowers—it wreathes its arms around my neck—and offers its mouth to my kisses—and then all at once is changed into a leering wretch, retaining a likeness of my bride—then into a corpse. And perhaps she is dead—

dead of cold and hunger: she whom I cherished in all luxury—whose delicate frame seemed to bring round itself all the purest air and sweetest sunshine—she may have expired in the very mire—and her body been huddled into some hole called a pauper's grave. And I have suffered all this to happen her! Or have I suffered her to become one of the miserable multitude who support hated and hateful life by prostitution? Black was her crime; yet hardly did she deserve to be one of that howling crew—she whose voice was once so sweet, her eyes so pure, and her soul so innocent—for up to the hour I parted with her weeping, no evil thought had ever been hers;—then why, ye eternal Heavens! why fell she from that sphere where she shone like a star? Let that mystery that shrouds my mind in darkness be lightened—let me see into its heart—and know but the meaning of her guilt—and then may I be able to forgive it; but for five years, day and night, it has troubled and confounded me—and from blind and baffled wrath with an iniquity that remains like a pitch-black night through which I cannot grope my way, no refuge can I find—and nothing is left me but to tear my hair out by handfuls—as, like a madman, I have done—to curse her by name in the solitary glooms, and to call down upon her the curse of God. O wicked—most wicked! Yet He who judges the hearts of his creatures, knows that I have a thousand and a thousand times forgiven her, but that a chasm lay between us, from which, the moment that I came to its brink, a voice drove me back—I know not whether of a good or evil spirit—and bade me leave her to her fate. But she must be dead—and needs not now my tears. O friend! judge me not too sternly—from this my confession; for all my wild words have imperfectly expressed to you but parts of my miserable being—and if I could lay it all before you, you would pity me perhaps as much as condemn—for my worst passions only have now found utterance—all my better feelings will not return nor abide for words—even I myself have forgotten them; but your pitying face seems to say, that they will be remembered at the Throne of Mercy. I forgive her." And with these words he fell down on his knees, and prayed too for pardon to his own sins. The old man encouraged him not to despair—it needed but a motion of his hand to bring the child from her couch in the cover, and Lucy was folded to her father's heart. The forgiveness was felt to be holy in that embrace.

The day had brightened up into more perfect beauty, and showers were sporting with sunshine on the blue air of Spring. The sky showed something like a rainbow—and the Lake, in some parts quite still, and in some breezy, contained at once shadowy fragments of wood and rock, and waves that would have murmured round the prow of pleasure-boat suddenly hoisting a sail. And such a very boat appeared round a promontory that stretched no great way into the water, and formed with a crescent of low meadow-land a bay that was the first to feel the wind coming down Glencoin. The boatman was rowing heedlessly along, when a sudden squall struck the

sail, and in an instant the skiff was upset and went down. No shrieks were heard—and the boatman swam ashore; but a figure was seen struggling where the sail disappeared—and starting from his knees, he who knew not fear plunged into the Lake, and after desperate exertions brought the drowned creature to the side—a female meanly attired—seemingly a stranger—and so attenuated that it was plain she must have been in a dying state, and had she not thus perished, would have had but few days to live. The hair was gray—but the face though withered was not old—and, as she lay on the greensward, the features were beautiful as well as calm in the sunshine.

He stood over her awhile—as if struck motionless—and then kneeling beside the body, kissed its lips and eyes—and said only, “It is Lucy!”

The old man was close by—and so was that child. They too knelt—and the passion of the mourner held him dumb, with his face close to the face of death—ghastly its glare beside the sleep that knows no waking, and is forsaken by all dreams. He opened the bosom—wasted to the bone—in the idle thought that she might yet breathe—and a paper dropt out into his hand, which he read aloud to himself—unconscious that any one was near. “I am fast dying—and desire to die at your feet. Perhaps you will spurn me—it is right you should; but you will see how sorrow has killed the wicked wretch who was once your wife. I have lived in humble servitude for five years, and have suffered great hardships. I think I am a penitent—and have been told by religious persons that I may hope for pardon from Heaven. Oh! that you would forgive me too! and let me have one look at our Lucy. I will linger about the Field of Flowers—perhaps you will come there, and see me lie down and die on the very spot where we passed a summer day the week of our marriage.”

“Not thus could I have kissed thy lips—Lucy—had they been red with life. White are they—and white must they long have been! No pollution on them—nor on that poor bosom now. Contrite tears had long since washed out thy sin. A feeble hand traced these lines—and in them an humble heart said nothing but God’s truth. Child—behold your mother. Art thou afraid to touch the dead?”

“No—father—I am not afraid to kiss her lips—as you did now. Sometimes, when you thought me asleep, I have heard you praying for my mother.”

“Oh! child! cease—cease—or my heart will burst.”

People began to gather about the body—but awe kept them aloof; and as for removing it to a house, none who saw it but knew such care would have been vain, for doubt there could be none that there lay death. So the groups remained for a while at a distance—even the old pastor went a good many paces apart; and under the shadow of that tree the father and child composed her limbs, and closed her eyes, and continued to sit beside her, as still as if they had been watching over one asleep.

That death was seen by all to be a strange calamity to him who had lived long among them—had adopted many of their customs—and was even as one of themselves—so it seemed—in the familiar intercourse of man with man. Some dim notion that this was the dead body of his wife was entertained by many, they knew not why; and their clergyman felt that then there needed to be neither concealment nor avowal of the truth. So in solemn sympathy they approached the body and its watchers; a bier had been prepared: and walking at the head, as if it had been a funeral, the Father of little Lucy, holding her hand, silently directed the procession towards his own house—out of the FIELD OF FLOWERS.

COTTAGES.

HAVE you any intention, dear reader, of building a house in the country? If you have, pray, for your own sake and ours, let it not be a Cottage. We presume that you are obliged to live, one-half of the year at least, in a town. Then why change altogether the character of your domicile and your establishment? You are an inhabitant of Edinburgh, and have a house in the Circus, or Heriot Row, or Abercromby Place, or Queen Street. The said house has five or six stories, and is such a palace as one might expect in the City of Palaces. Your drawing-rooms can, at a pinch, hold some ten score of modern Athenians—your dining-room might feast one-half of the contributors to Blackwood’s Magazine—your “*placens uxor*” has her boudoir—your eldest daughter, now verging on womanhood, her music-room—your boys their own studio—the

governess her retreat—and the tutor his den—the housekeeper sits like an overgrown spider in her own sanctum—the butler bargains for his dim apartment—and the four maids must have their front-area window. In short, from cellarage to garret, all is complete, and Number Forty-two is really a splendid mansion.

Now, dear reader, far be it from us to question the propriety or prudence of such an establishment. Your house was not built for nothing—it was no easy thing to get the painters out—the furnishing thereof was no trifle—the feu-duty is really unreasonable—and taxes are taxes still, notwithstanding the principles of free trade, and the universal prosperity of the country. Servants are wasteful, and their wages absurd—and the whole style of living, with long-necked bottles, most extravagant. But still we do not object to your establish-

ment—far from it, we admire it much; nor is there a single house in town where we make ourselves more agreeable to a late hour, or that we leave with a greater quantity of wine of a good quality under our girdle. Few things would give us more temporary uneasiness, than to hear of any embarrassment in your money concerns. We are not people to forget good fare, we assure you; and long and far may all shapes of sorrow keep aloof from the hospitable board, whether illuminated by gas, oil, or mutton.

But what we were going to say is this—that the head of such a house ought not to live, when ruralizing, in a Cottage. He ought to be consistent. Nothing so beautiful as consistency. What then is so absurd as to cram yourself, your wife, your numerous progeny, and your scarcely less numerous menials, into a concern called a Cottage? The ordinary heat of a baker's oven is very few degrees above that of a brown study, during the month of July, in a substantial, low-roofed Cottage. Then the smell of the kitchen! How it aggravates the sultry closeness! A strange, compounded, inexplicable smell of animal, vegetable, and mineral matter. It is at the worst during the latter part of the forenoon, when every thing has been got into preparation for cookery. There is then nothing savoury about the smell—it is dull, dead—almost catacombish. A small back-kitchen has it in its power to destroy the sweetness of any Cottage. Add a scullery, and the three are omnipotent. Of the eternal clashing of pots, pans, plates, trenchers, and general crockery, we now say nothing; indeed, the sound somewhat relieves the smell, and the ear comes occasionally in to the aid of the nose. Such noises are wind-falls; but not so the scolding of cook and butler—at first low and tetchy, with pauses—then sharp, but still interrupted—by and by, loud and ready in reply—finally a discordant gabble of vulgar fury, like maniacs quarrelling in bedlam. Hear it you must—you and all the strangers. To explain it away is impossible; and your fear is, that Alecto, Tisiphone, or Megæra, will come flying into the parlour with a bloody cleaver, dripping with the butler's brains. During the time of the quarrel the spit has been standing still, and a gigot of the five-year-old black-face burnt on one side to cinder.—“To dinner with what appetite you may.”

It would be quite unpardonable to forget one especial smell which irretrievably ruined our happiness during a whole summer—the smell of a dead rat. The accursed vermin died somewhere in the Cottage; but whether beneath a floor, within lath and plaster, or in roof, baffled the conjectures of the most sagacious. The whole family used to walk about the Cottage for hours every day, snuffing on a travel of discovery; and we distinctly remember the face of one elderly maiden-lady at the moment she thought she had traced the source of the fumée to the wall behind a window-shutter. But even at the very same instant we ourselves had proclaimed it with open nostril from a press in an opposite corner. Terriers were procured—but the dog Billy himself would have been at fault. To pull

down the whole Cottage would have been difficult—at least to build it up again would have been so; so we had to submit. Custom, they say, is second nature, but not when a dead rat is in the house. No, none can ever become accustomed to that; yet good springs out of evil—for the live rats could not endure it, and emigrated to a friend's house, about a mile off, who has never had a sound night's rest from that day. We have not revisited our Cottage for several years; but time does wonders, and we were lately told by a person of some veracity, that the smell was then nearly gone—but our informant is a gentleman of blunted olfactory nerves, having been engaged from seventeen to seventy in a soap-work.

Smoke too! More especially that mysterious and infernal sort, called back-smoke! The old proverb, “No smoke without fire,” is a base lie. We have seen smoke without fire in every room in a most delightful Cottage we inhabited during the dog-days. The moment you rushed for refuge even into a closet, you were blinded and stifled; nor shall we ever forget our horror on being within an ace of smotheration in the cellar. At last, we groped our way into the kitchen. Neither cook nor jack was visible. We heard, indeed, a whirring and revolving noise—and then suddenly Grizie swearing through the mist. Yet all this while people were admiring our cottage from a distance, and especially this self-same accursed back-smoke, some portions of which had made an excursion up the chimneys, and was wavering away in a spiral form to the sky, in a style captivating to Mr. Price on the Picturesque.

No doubt, there are many things very romantic about a Cottage. Creepers, for example. Why, sir, these creepers are the most mischievous nuisance that can afflict a family. There is no occasion for mentioning names, but—devil take all parasites. Some of the rogues will actually grow a couple of inches upon you in one day's time; and when all other honest plants are asleep, the creepers are hard at it all night long, stretching out their toes and their fingers, and catching an inextricable hold of every wall they can reach, till, finally, you see them thrusting their impudent heads through the very slates. Then, like other low-bred creatures, they are covered with vermin. All manner of moths—the most grievous grubs—slimy slugs—spiders spinning toils to ensnare the caterpillar—earwigs and slaters, that would raise the gorge of a country curate—woodlice—the slaver of gowk's-spittle—midges—jocks-with-the-many-legs—in short, the whole plague of insects infest that—Virgin's bower. Open the lattice for half an hour, and you find yourself in an entomological museum. Then, there are no pins fixing down the specimens. All these beetles are alive, more especially the enormous blackguard crawling behind your ear. A moth plumps into your tumbler of cold negus, and goes whirling around in meal, till he makes absolute porritch. As you open your mouth in amazement, the large blue-bottle fly, having made his escape from the spiders, and seeing that not a moment is to be lost, precipitates himself head-foremost down your throat, and is felt, after a few ineffectual struggles,

settling in despair at the very bottom of your stomach. Still, no person will be so unreasonable as to deny that creepers on a Cottage are most beautiful. For the sake of their beauty, some little sacrifices must be made of one's comforts, especially as it is only for one-half of the year, and last really was a most delightful summer.

How truly romantic is a thatch roof! The eaves how commodious for sparrows! Whata paradise for rats and mice! What a comfortable colony of vermin! They all bore their own tunnels in every direction, and the whole interior becomes a Cretan labyrinth. Frush, frush becomes the whole cover in a few seasons; and not a bird can open his wing, not a rat switch his tail, without scattering the straw like chaff. Eternal repairs! Look when you will, and half-a-dozen thatchers are riding on the rigging: of all operatives the most inoperative. Then there is always one of the number descending the ladder for a horn of ale. Without warning, the straw is all used up; and no more fit for the purpose can be got within twenty miles. They hint heather—and you sigh for slate—the beautiful sky-blue, sea-green, Ballahulish slate! But the summer is nearly over and gone, and you must be flitting back to the city; so you let the job stand over to spring, and the soaking rains and snows of a long winter search the Cottage to its heart's-core, and every floor is erelong laden with a crop of fungi—the bed-posts are ornamented curiously with lichens, and mosses bathe the walls with their various and inimitable lustre.

Every thing is romantic that is pastoral—and what more pastoral than sheep? Accordingly, living in a Cottage, you kill your own mutton. Great lubberly Leicesters or South-Downs are not worth the mastication, so you keep the small black-face. Stone walls are ugly things, you think, near a Cottage, so you have rails or hurdles. Day and night are the small black-face, out of pure spite, bouncing through or over all impediments, after an adventurous leader, and, despising the daisied turf, keep nibbling away at all your rare flowering shrubs, till your avenue is a desolation. Every twig has its little ball of wool, and it is a rare time for the nest-makers. You purchase a colley, but he compromises the affair with the fleecy nation, and contents himself with barking all night long at the moon, if there happen to be one, if not, at the firmament of his kennel. You are too humane to hang or drown Luath, so you give him to a friend. But Luath is in love with the cook, and pays her nightly visits. Afraid of being entrapped should he step into the kennel, he takes up his station, after supper, on a knoll within ear-range, and pointing his snout to the stars, joins the music of the spheres, and is himself a perfect Sirius. The gardener at last gets orders to shoot him—and the gun being somewhat rusty, bursts and blows off his left hand—so that Andrew Fairservice retires on a pension.

Of all breeds of cattle we most admire the Alderney. They are slim, delicate, wild-deer-looking creatures, that give an air to a Cottage. But they are most capricious milkers. Of course you make your own butter; that is

to say, with the addition of a dozen purchased pounds weekly, you are not very often out of that commodity. Then, once or twice in a summer, they suddenly lose their temper, and chase the governess and your daughters over the edge of a gravel-pit. Nothing they like so much as the tender sprouts of cauliflower, nor do they abhor green pease. The garden-hedge is of privet, a pretty fence, and fast growing, but not formidable to a four-year-old. On going to eat a few gooseberries by sunrise, you start a covey of cows, that in their alarm plunge into the hot-bed with a smash, as if all the glass in the island had been broken—and rushing out at the gate at the critical instant little Tommy is tottering in, they leave the heir-apparent, scarcely deserving that name, half hidden in the border. There is no sale for such outlandish animals in the home-market, and it is not Martinmas, so you must make a present of them to the president or five silver-cupman of an agricultural society, and you receive in return a sorry red round, desperately saltpetred, at Christmas.

What is a Cottage in the country, unless "your banks are all furnished with bees, whose murmurs invite one to sleep?" There the hives stand, like four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row. Not a more harmless insect in all this world than a bee. Wasps are devils incarnate, but bees are fleshly sprites, as amiable as industrious. You are strolling along, in delightful mental vacuity, looking at a poem of Barry Cornwall's, when smack comes an infuriated honey-maker against your eyelid, and plunges into you the fortieth part of an inch of sting saturated in venom. The wretch clings to your lid like a burr, and it feels as if he had a million claws to hold him on while he is darting his weapon into your eyeball. Your banks are indeed well furnished with bees, but their murmurs do not invite you to sleep; on the contrary, away you fly like a madman, bolt into your wife's room, and roar out for the recipe. The whole of one side of your face is most absurdly swollen, while the other is *in statu quo*. One eye is dwindled away to almost nothing, and is peering forth from its rainbow-coloured envelope, while the other is open as day to melting charity, and shining over a cheek of the purest crimson. Infatuated man! Why could you not purchase your honey? Jemmy Thomson, the poet, would have let you have it, from Habbie's-Howe, the true Pentland elixir, for five shillings the pint; for during this season both the heather and the clover were prolific of the honey-dew, and the Skeps rejoiced over all Scotland on a thousand hills.

We could tell many stories about bees, but that would be leading us away from the main argument. We remember reading in an American newspaper, some years ago, that the United States lost one of their most upright and erudite judges by bees, which stung him to death in a wood while he was going the circuit. About a year afterwards, we read in the same newspaper, "We are afraid we have lost another judge by bees;" and then followed a somewhat affrightful description of the assassination of another American Blackstone

by the same insects. We could not fail to sympathize with both sufferers; for in the summer of the famous comet we ourselves had nearly shared the same fate. Our Newfoundlander upset a hive in his vagaries—and the whole swarm unjustly attacked us. The buzz was an absolute roar—and for the first time in our lives we were under a cloud. Such bizzing in our hair! and of what avail were fifty-times-washed nankeen breeches against the Polish Lancers? With our trusty crutch we made thousands bite the dust—but the wounded and dying crawled up our legs, and stung us cruelly over the lower regions. At last we took to flight, and found shelter in the ice-house. But it seemed as if a new hive had been disturbed in that cool grotto. Again we sallied out stripping off garment after garment, till in *puris naturalibus*, we leaped into a window, which happened to be that of the drawing-room, where a large party of ladies and gentlemen were awaiting the dinner-bell—but fancy must dream the rest.

We now offer a Set of Blackwood's Magazine to any scientific character who will answer this seemingly simple question—what is Damp? Quicksilver is a joke to it, for getting into or out of any place. Capricious as damp is, it is faithful in its affection to all Cottages ornées. What more pleasant than a bow-window? You had better, however, not sit with your back against the wall, for it is as blue and ropy as that of a charnel-house. Probably the wall is tastily papered—a vine-leaf pattern perhaps—or something spriggy—or in the aviary line—or, mayhap, hay-makers, or shepherds piping in the dale. But all distinctions are levelled in the mould—Phyllis has a black patch over her eye, and Strephon seems to be playing on a pair of bellows. Damp delights to descend chimneys, and is one of smoke's most powerful auxiliaries. It is a thousand pities you hung up—just in that unlucky spot—Grecian Williams's Thebes—for now one of the finest water-colour paintings in the world is not worth six-and-eightpence. There is no living in the country without a library. Take down, with all due caution, that enormous tome, the *Excursion*, and let us hear something of the Pedlar. There is an end to the invention of printing. Lo and behold, blank verse indeed! You cannot help turning over twenty leaves at once, for they are all amalgamated in must and mouldiness. Lord Byron himself is no better than an Egyptian mummy; and the Great Unknown addresses you in hieroglyphics.

We have heard different opinions maintained on the subject of damp sheets. For our own part, we always wish to feel the difference between sheets and cerements. We hate every thing clammy. It is awkward, on leaping out of bed to admire the moon, to drag along with you, glued round the body and members, the whole paraphernalia of the couch. It can never be good for rheumatism—problematical even for fever. Now, be candid—did you ever sleep in perfectly dry sheets in a Cottage ornée? You would not like to say "No, never," in the morning—privately, to host or hostess. But confess publicly, and

trace your approaching retirement from all the troubles of this life, to the dimity-curtained cubiculum on Tweedside.

We know of few events so restorative as the arrival of a coachful of one's friends, if the house be roomy. But if every thing there be on a small scale, how tremendous a sudden importation of live cattle! The children are all trundled away out of the cottage, and their room given up to the young ladies, with all its enigmatical and emblematical wall-tracery. The captain is billeted in the boudoir, on a shake-down. My lady's maid must positively pass the night in the butler's pantry, and the valet makes a dormitory of the store-room. Where the old gentleman and his spouse have been disposed of, remains as controversial a point as the authorship of Junius; but next morning at the breakfast-table, it appears that all have survived the night, and the hospitable hostess remarks, with a self-complacent smile, that small as the cottage appears, it has wonderful accommodation, and could have easily admitted half a dozen more patients. The visitors politely request to be favoured with a plan of so very commodious a cottage, but silently swear never again to sleep in a house of one story, till life's brief tale be told.

But not one half the comforts of a cottage have yet been enumerated—nor shall they be by us at the present juncture. Suffice it to add, that the strange coachman had been persuaded to put up his horses in the outhouses, instead of taking them to an excellent inn about two miles off. The old black long-tailed steeds, that had dragged the vehicle for nearly twenty years, had been lodged in what was called the stable, and the horse behind had been introduced into the byre. As bad luck would have it, a small, sick, and surly shelly was in his stall; and without the slightest provocation, he had, during the night-watches, so handled his heels against Mr. Fox, that he had not left the senior a leg to stand upon, while he had bit a lump'out of the buttocks of Mr. Pitt little less than an orange. A cow, afraid of her calf, had committed an assault on the roadster, and tore up his flank with her crooked horn as clean as if it had been a ripping chisel. The party had to proceed with post-horses; and although Mr. Dick be at once one of the most skilful and most moderate of veterinary surgeons, his bill at the end of autumn was necessarily as long as that of a proctor. Mr. Fox gave up the ghost—Mr. Pitt was put on the superannuated list—and Joseph Hume, the hack, was sent to the dogs.

To this condition, then, we must come at last, that if you build at all in the country, it must be a mansion three stories high, at the lowest—large airy rooms—roof of slates and lead—and walls of the freestone or the Roman cement. No small black-faces, no Alderneys, no beehives. Buy all your vivres, and live like a gentleman. Seldom or never be without a houseful of company. If you manage your family matters properly, you may have your time nearly as much at your own disposal as if you were the greatest of hunks, and never gave but unavoidable dinners. Let the breakfast-gong sound at ten o'clock—quite

soon enough. The young people will have been romping about the parlours or the purlieus for a couple of hours—and will all make their appearance in the beauty of high health and high spirits. Chat away as long as need be, after muffins and mutton-ham, in small groups on sofas and settees, and then slip you away to your library, to add a chapter to your novel, or your history, or to any other task that is to make you immortal. Let gigs and curricles draw up in the circle, and the wooing and betrothed wheel away across a few parishes. Let the pedestrians saunter off into the woods or to the hillside—the anglers be off to loch or river. No great harm even in a game or two at billiards—if such be of any the cue—sagacious spinsters of a certain age, staid dowagers, and bachelors of sedentary habits, may have recourse, without blame, to the chess or backgammon board. At two lunch—and at six the dinner-gong will bring the whole flock together, all dressed—mind that—all dressed, for slovenliness is an abomination. Let no elderly gentleman, however bilious and rich, seek to monopolize a young lady—but study the nature of things. Champagne of course, and if not all the delicacies, at least all the substantialities of the season. Join the ladies in about two hours—a little elevated or so—almost imperceptibly—but still a little elevated or so; then music—whispering in corners—if moonlight and stars, then an hour's out-of-door study of astronomy—no very regular supper—but an appearance of plates and tumblers, and to bed, to happy dreams and slumbers light, at the witching hour. Let no gentleman or lady snore, if it can be avoided, lest they annoy the crickets; and if you hear any extraordinary noise round and round about the mansion, be not alarmed, for why should not the owls choose their own hour of revelry?

Fond as we are of the country, we would not, had we our option, live there all the year round. We should just wish to linger into the winter about as far as the middle of December—then to a city—say at once Edinburgh. There is as good skating-ground, and as good curling-ground, at Lochend and Duddingstone, as any where in all Scotland—nor is there anywhere else better beef and greens. There is no perfection anywhere, but Edinburgh society is excellent. We are certainly agreeable citizens; with just a sufficient spice of party spirit to season the feast of reason and the flow of soul, and to prevent society from becoming drowsily unanimous. Without the filip of a little scandal, honest people would fall asleep; and surely it is far preferable to that to abuse one's friends with moderation. Even Literature and the Belles Lettres are not entirely useless; and our Human Life would not be so delightful as that of Mr. Rogers, without a few occasional Noctes Ambrosianæ.

But the title of our article recalls our wandering thoughts, and our talk must be of Cottages. Now, think not, beloved reader, that we care not for Cottages, for that would indeed be a gross mistake. But our very affections are philosophical; our sympathies have all

their source in reason; and our admiration is always built on the foundation of truth. Taste, and feeling, and thought, and experience, and knowledge of this life's concerns, are all indispensable to the true delights the imagination experiences in beholding a beautiful *bonâ fide* Cottage. It must be the dwelling of the poor; and it is that which gives it its whole character. By the poor, we mean not paupers, beggars; but families who, to eat, must work, and who, by working, may still be able to eat. Plain, coarse, not scanty, but unsuperfluous fare is theirs from year's-end to year's-end, excepting some decent and grateful change on chance holydays of nature's own appointment—a wedding, or a christening, or a funeral. Yes, a funeral; for when this mortal coil is shuffled off, why should the hundreds of people that come trooping over muirs and mosses to see the body deposited, walk so many miles, and lose a whole day's work, without a dinner? And, if there be a dinner, should it not be a good one? And if a good one, will the company not be social? But this is a subject for a future paper, nor need such paper be of other than a cheerful character. Poverty, then, is the builder and beautifier of all huts and cottages. But the views of honest poverty are always hopeful and prospective. Strength of muscle and strength of mind form a truly Holy Alliance; and the future brightens before the steadfast eyes of trust. Therefore, when a house is built in the valley, or on the hillside—be it that of the poorest cottar—there is some little room, or nook, or spare place, which hope consecrates to the future. Better times may come—a shilling or two may be added to the week's wages—parsimony may accumulate a small capital in the Savings bank sufficient to purchase an old eight-day clock, a chest of drawers for the wife, a curtained bed for the lumber-place, which a little labour will convert into a bed-room. It is not to be thought that the pasture-fields become every year greener, and the corn-fields every harvest more yellow—that the hedgerows grow to thicker fragrance, and the birch-tree waves its tresses higher in the air, and expands its white-rinded stem almost to the bulk of a tree of the forest—and yet that there shall be no visible progress from good to better in the dwelling of those whose hands and hearts thus cultivate the soil into rejoicing beauty. As the whole land prospers, so does each individual dwelling. Every ten years, the observing eye sees a new expression on the face of the silent earth; the law of labour is no melancholy lot; for to industry the yoke is easy, and content is its own exceeding great reward.

Therefore, it does our heart good to look on a Cottage. Here the objections to straw-roofs have no application. A few sparrows chirping and fluttering in the eaves can do no great harm, and they serve to amuse the children. The very baby in the cradle, when all the family are in the fields, mother and all, hears the cheerful twitter, and is reconciled to solitude. The quantity of corn that a few sparrows can eat—greedy creatures as they are—cannot be very deadly; and it is chiefly in the winter time that they attack the stacks, when there is

much excuse to be made on the plea of hunger. As to the destruction of a little thatch, why, there is not a boy about the house, above ten years, who is not a thatcher, and there is no expense in such repairs. Let the honeysuckle too steal up the wall, and even blind unchecked a corner of the kitchen-window. Its fragrance will often cheer unconsciously the labourer's heart, as, in the midday-hour of rest, he sits dandling his child on his knee, or converses with the passing pedlar. Let the moss-rose tree flourish, that its bright blush-balls may dazzle in the kirk the eyes of the lover of fair Helen Irwin, as they rise and fall with every movement of a bosom yet happy in its virgin innocence. Nature does not spread in vain her flowers in flush and fragrance over every obscure nook of earth. Simple and pure is the delight they inspire. Not to the poet's eye alone is their language addressed. The beautiful symbols are understood by lowliest minds; and while the philosophical Wordsworth speaks of the meanest flower that blows giving a joy too deep for tears, so do all mankind feel the exquisite truth of Burns's more simple address to the mountain-daisy which his ploughshare had upturned. The one touches sympathies too profound to be general—the other speaks as a son of the soil affected by the fate of the most familiar flower that springs from the bosom of our common dust.

Generally speaking, there has been a spirit of improvement at work, during these last twenty years, upon all the Cottages in Scotland. The villages are certainly much neater and cleaner than formerly, and in very few respects, if any, positively offensive. Perhaps none of them have—nor ever will have—the exquisite trimness, the habitual and hereditary rustic elegance, of the best villages of England. There, even the idle and worthless have an instinctive love of what is decent, and orderly, and pretty in their habitations. The very drunkard must have a well-sanded floor, a clean-swept hearth, clear-polished furniture, and uncobwebbed walls to the room in which he quaffs, guzzles, and smokes himself into stupidity. His wife may be a scold, but seldom a slattern—his children ill taught, but well apparelled. Much of this is observable even among the worst of the class; and, no doubt, such things must also have their effect in tempering and restraining excesses. Whereas, on the other hand, the house of a well-behaved, well-doing English villager is a perfect model of comfort and propriety. In Scotland, the houses of the dissolute are always dens of dirt, and disorder, and distraction. All ordinary goings-on are inextricably confused—meals eaten in different nooks, and at no regular hour—nothing in its right place or time—the whole abode as if on the eve of a flitting; while, with few exceptions, even in the dwellings of the best families in the village, one may detect occasional forgetfulness of trifling matters, that, if remembered, would be found greatly conducive to comfort—occasional insensibilities to what would be graceful in their condition, and might be secured at little expense and less trouble—occasional blindness to minute deformities that mar the aspect of the

household, and which an awakened eye would sweep away as absolute nuisances. Perhaps the very depth of their affections—the solemnity of their religious thought—and the reflective spirit in which they carry on the warfare of life—hide from them the perception of what, after all, is of such very inferior moment, and even create a sort of austerity of character which makes them disregard, too much, trifles that appear to have no influence or connection with the essence of weal or woe. Yet if there be any truth in this, it affords, we confess, an explanation rather than a justification.

Our business at present, however, is rather with single Cottages than with villages. We Scottish people have, for some years past, been doing all we could to make ourselves ridiculous, by claiming for our capital the name of Modern Athens, and talking all manner of nonsense about a city which stands nobly on its own proper foundation; while we have kept our mouths comparatively shut about the beauty of our hills and vales, and the rational happiness that everywhere overflows our native land. Our character is to be found in the country; and therefore, gentle reader, behold along with us a specimen of Scottish scenery. It is not above some four miles long—its breadth somewhere about a third of its length; a fair oblong, sheltered and secluded by a line of varied eminences, on some of which lies the power of cultivation, and over others the vivid verdure peculiar to a pastoral region; while, telling of disturbed times past for ever, stand yonder the ruins of an old fortalice or keep, picturesque in its deserted decay. The plough has stopped at the edge of the profitable and beautiful coppice-woods, and encircled the tall elm-grove. The rocky pasture, with its clovery and daisied turf, is alive with sheep and cattle—its briery knolls with birds—its broom and whins with bees—and its wimpling burn with trout and minnows glancing through the shallows, or leaping among the cloud of insects that glitter over its pools. Here and there a cottage—not above twenty in all—one low down in the holm, another on a cliff beside the waterfall: that is the mill—another breaking the horizon in its more ambitious station—and another far up at the hill-foot, where there is not a single tree, only shrubs and brackens. On a bleak day, there is but little beauty in such a glen; but when the sun is cloudless, and all the light serene, it is a place where poet or painter may see visions, and dream dreams, of the very age of gold. At such seasons, there is a homefelt feeling of humble reality, blending with the emotions of imagination. In such places, the low-born, high-souled poets of old breathed forth their songs, and hymns, and elegies—the undying lyrical poetry of the heart of Scotland.

Take the remotest cottage first in order, HILLFOOT, and hear who are its inmates—the Schoolmaster and his spouse. The school-house stands on a little unappropriated piece of ground—at least it seems to be so—quite at the head of the glen; for there the hills sink down on each side, and afford an easy access to the seat of learning from two neighbouring

vales, both in the same parish. Perhaps fifty scholars are there taught—and with their small fees, and his small salary, Allan Easton is contented. Allan was originally intended for the Church; but some peccadilloes obstructed his progress with the Presbytery, and he never was a preacher. That disappointment of all his hopes was for many years grievously felt, and somewhat soured his mind with the world. It is often impossible to recover one single false step in the slippery road of life—and Allan Easton, year after year, saw himself falling farther and farther into the rear of almost all his contemporaries. One became a minister, and got a manse, with a stipend of twenty chalders; another grew into an East India Nabob; one married the laird's widow, and kept a pack of hounds; another expanded into a colonel; one cleared a plum by a cotton-mill; another became the Cæsus of a bank—while Allan, who had beat them all hollow at all the classes, wore second-hand clothes, and lived on the same fare with the poorest hind in the parish. He had married, rather too late, the partner of his frailties—and after many trials, and, as he thought, not a few persecutions, he got settled at last, when his head, not very old, was getting gray, and his face somewhat wrinkled. His wife, during his worst poverty, had gone again into service—the lot, indeed, to which she had been born; and Allan had struggled and starved upon private teaching. His appointment to the parish-school had, therefore, been to them both a blessed elevation. The office was respectable—and loftier ambition had long been dead. Now they are old people—considerably upwards of sixty—and twenty years' professional life have converted Allan Easton, once the wild and eccentric genius, into a staid, solemn, formal, and pedantic pedagogue. All his scholars love him, for even in the discharge of such very humble duties, talents make themselves felt and respected; and the kindness of an affectionate and once sorely wounded but now healed heart, is never lost upon the susceptible imaginations of the young. Allan has sometimes sent out no contemptible scholars, as scholars go in Scotland, to the universities; and his heart has warmed within him when he has read their names, in the newspaper from the manse, in the list of successful competitors for prizes. During vacation-time, Allan and his spouse leave their cottage locked up, and disappear, none know exactly whither, on visits to an old friend or two, who have not altogether forgotten them in their obscurity. During the rest of the year, his only out-of-doors amusement is an afternoon's angling, an art in which it is universally allowed he excels all mortal men, both in river and loch; and often, during the long winter nights, when the shepherd is walking by his dwelling, to visit his "ain lassie," down the burn, he hears Allan's fiddle playing, in the solitary silence, some one of those Scottish melodies, that we know not whether it be cheerful or plaintive, but soothing to every heart that has been at all acquainted with grief. Rumour says too, but rumour has not a scrupulous conscience, that the Schoolmaster, when he meets with pleasant

company, either at home or a friend's house, is not averse to a hospitable cup, and that then the memories of other days crowd upon his brain, and loosen his tongue into eloquence. Old Susan keeps a sharp warning eye upon her husband on all such occasions; but Allan braves its glances, and is forgiven.

We see only the uncertain glimmer of their dwelling through the low-lying mist: and therefore we cannot describe it, as if it were clearly before our eyes. But should you ever chance to angle your way up to HILLFOOT, admire Allan Easton's flower-garden, and the jargonel pear-tree on the southern gable. The climate is somewhat high, but it is not cold; and, except when the spring-frosts come late and sharp, there do all blossoms and fruits abound, on every shrub and tree native to Scotland. You will hardly know how to distinguish—or rather, to speak in clerly phrase, to analyze the sound prevalent over the fields and air; for it is made up of that of the burn, of bees, of old Susan's wheel, and the hum of the busy school. But now it is the play-hour, and Allan Easton comes into his kitchen for his frugal dinner. Brush up your Latin, and out with a few of the largest trouts in your pannier. Susan fries them in fresh butter and oatmeal—the grayhaired pedagogue asks a blessing—and a merrier man, within the limits of becoming mirth, you never passed an hour's talk withal. So much for Allan Easton and Susan his spouse.

You look as if you wished to ask who inhabits the Cottage—on the left hand yonder—that stares upon us with four front windows, and pricks up its ears like a new-started hare? Why, sir, that was once a Shooting-box. It was built about twenty years ago, by a sporting gentleman of two excellent double-barrelled guns, and three stanch pointers. He attempted to live there, several times, from the 12th of August till the end of September, and went pluffing disconsolately among the hills from sunrise to sunset. He has been long dead and buried; and the Box, they say, is now haunted. It has been attempted to be let furnished, and there is now a board to that effect hung out like an escutcheon. Picturesque people say it ruins the whole beauty of the glen; but we must not think so, for it is not in the power of the ugliest house that ever was built to do that, although, to effect such a purpose, it is unquestionably a skilful contrivance. The window-shutters have been closed for several years, and the chimneys look as if they had breathed their last. It stands in a perpetual eddy, and the ground shelves so all around it, that there is barely room for a barrel to catch the rain-drippings from the slate-eaves. If it be indeed haunted, pity the poor ghost! You may have it on a lease, short or long, for merely paying the taxes. Every year it costs some pounds in advertisement. What a jointure-house it would be for a relict! By name, WINDY-KNOWE.

Nay, let us not fear to sketch the character of its last inhabitant, for we desire but to speak the truth. Drunkard, stand forward, that we may have a look at you, and draw your picture. There he stands! The mouth of the

drunkard, you may observe, contracts a singularly sensitive appearance—seemingly red and rawish; and he is perpetually licking or smacking his lips, as if his palate were dry and adust. His is a thirst that water will not quench. He might as well drink air. His whole being burns for a dram. The whole world is contracted into a caulker. He would sell his soul in such extremity, were the black bottle denied him, for a gulp. Not to save his soul from eternal fire, would he, or rather could he, if left alone with it, refrain from pulling out the plug, and sucking away at destruction. What a snout he turns up to the morning air, inflamed, pimpled, snubby, and snorty, and with a nob at the end on't like one carved out of a stick by the knife of a schoolboy—rough and hot to the very eye—a nose which, rather than pull, you would submit even to be in some degree insulted. A perpetual cough harasses and exhausts him, and a perpetual expectation. How his hand trembles! It is an effort even to sign his name: one of his sides is certainly not by any means as sound as the other; there has been a touch of palsy there; and the next hint will draw down his chin to his collar-bone, and convert him, a month before dissolution, into a slaving idiot. There is no occupation, small or great, insignificant or important, to which he can turn, for any length of time, his hand, his heart, or his head. He cannot angle—for his fingers refuse to tie a knot, much more to busk a fly. The glimmer and the glow of the stream would make his brain dizzy—to wet his feet row would, he fears, be death. Yet he thinks that he will go out—during that sunny blink of a showery day—and try the well-known pool in which he used to bathe in boyhood, with the long, matted, green-trailing water-plants depending on the slippery rocks, and the water-ousel gliding from beneath the arch that hides her “procreant cradle,” and then sinking like a stone suddenly in the limpid stream. He sits down on the bank, and fumbling in his pouch for his pocket-book, brings out, instead, a pocket-pistol. Turning his fiery face towards the mild, blue, vernal sky, he pours the gurgling brandy down his throat—first one dose, and then another—till, in an hour, stupefied and dazed, he sees not the silvery crimson-spotted trouts, shooting, and leaping, and tumbling, and plunging in deep and shallow; a day on which, with one of Captain Colley's March-Browns, in an hour we could fill our pannier. Or, if it be autumn or winter, he calls, perhaps, with a voice at once gruff and feeble, on old Ponto, and will take a pluff at the partridges. In former days, down they used to go, right and left, in potatoe or turnip-field, broomy brae or stubble—but now his sight is dim and wavering, and his touch trembles on the trigger. The covey whirs off, unharmed in a single feather—and poor Ponto, remembering better days, cannot conceal his melancholy, falls in at his master's heel, and will range no more. Out, as usual, comes the brandy-bottle—he is still a good shot when his mouth is the mark; and having emptied the fatal flask, he staggers homewards, with the muzzles of his double-barrel fre-

quently pointed to his ear, both being on full cock, and his brains not blown out only by a miracle. He tries to read the newspaper—just arrived—but cannot find his spectacles. Then, by way of variety, he attempts a tune on the fiddle; but the bridge is broken, and her side cracked, and the bass-string snapped—and she is restored to her peg among the cobwebs. In comes a red-headed, stockingless lass, with her carrots in papers, and lays the cloth for dinner—salt beef and greens. But the Major's stomach scunners at the Skye-stot—his eyes roll eagerly for the hot-water—and in a couple of hours he is dead-drunk in his chair, or stoitering and staggering, in aimless dalliance with the scullion, among the pots and pans of an ever-disorderly and dirty kitchen. Mean people, in shabby sporting velveteen dresses, rise up as he enters from the dresser covered with cans, jugs, and quechs, and take off their rusty and greasy napless hats to the Major; and, to conclude the day worthily and consistently, he squelches himself down among the reprobate crew, takes his turn at smutty jest and smuttier song, which drive even the jades out of the kitchen—falls back insensible, exposed to gross and indecent practical jokes from the vilest of the unchanged—and finally is carried to bed on a hand-barrow, with hanging head and heels, like a calf across a butcher's cart, and, with glazed eyes and lolling tongue, is tumbled upon the quilt—if ever to awake it is extremely doubtful; but if awake he do, it is to the same wretched round of brutal degradation—a career, of which the inevitable close is an unfriended death-bed and a pauper's grave. O hero! six feet high, and once with a brawn like Hercules—in the prime of life too—well born and well bred—once bearing the king's commission—and on that glorious morn, now forgotten or bitterly remembered, thanked on the field of battle by Picton, though he of the fighting division was a hero of few words—is that a death worthy of a man—a soldier—and a Christian? A dram-drinker! Faugh! faugh! Look over—lean over that stile, where a pig lies wallowing in mire—and a voice, faint and feeble, and far off, as if it came from some dim and remote world within your lost soul will cry, that of the two beasts, that bristly one, agrunt in sensual sleep, with its snout snoring across the husk trough, is, as a physical, moral and intellectual being, superior to you, late Major in his Majesty's—regiment of foot, now dram-drinker, drunkard, and dotard, and self-doomed to a disgraceful and disgusting death ere you shall have completed your thirtieth year. What a changed being from that day when you carried the colours, and were found, the bravest of the brave, and the most beautiful of the beautiful, with the glorious tatters wrapped round your body all drenched in blood, your hand grasping the broken sabre, and two grim Frenchmen lying hacked and hewed at your feet! Your father and your mother saw your name in the “Great Lord's” Despatch; and it was as much as he could do to keep her from falling on the floor, for “her joy was like a deep affright!” Both are dead now; and better so, for the sight of that bloated

face and those glazed eyes, now and then glittering in fitful frenzy, would have killed them both, nor, after such a spectacle, could their old bones have rested in the grave.

Alas, Scotland—ay, well-educated, moral, religious Scotland can show, in the bosom of her bonny banks and braes, cases worse than this; at which, if there be tears in heaven, the angels weep. Look at that grayheaded man, of threescore and upwards, sitting by the wayside! He was once an Elder of the Kirk, and a pious man he was, if ever piety adorned the temples—"the lyart haffets, wearing thin and bare," of a Scottish peasant. What eye beheld the many hundred steps, that one by one, with imperceptible gradation, led him down—down—to the lowest depths of shame, suffering, and ruin? For years before it was bruited abroad through the parish that Gabriel Mason was addicted to drink, his wife used to sit weeping alone in the spence when her sons and daughters were out at their work in the fields, and the infatuated man, fierce in the excitement of raw ardent spirits, kept causelessly raging and storming through every nook of that once so peaceful tenement, which for many happy years had never been disturbed by the loud voice of anger or reproach. His eyes were seldom turned on his unhappy wife except with a sullen scowl, or fiery wrath; but when they did look on her with kindness, there was also a rueful self-upbraiding in their expression, on account of his cruelty; and at sight of such transitory tenderness, her heart would overflow with forgiving affection, and her sunk eyes with unendurable tears. But neither domestic sin nor domestic sorrow will conceal from the eyes and the ears of men; and at last Gabriel Mason's name was a by-word in the mouth of the scoffer. One Sabbath he entered the kirk in a state of miserable abandonment, and from that day he was no longer an elder. To regain his character seemed to him, in his desperation, beyond the power of man, and against the decree of God. So he delivered himself up, like a slave, to that one appetite, and in a few years his whole household had gone to destruction. His wife was a matron, almost in the prime of life, when she died; but as she kept wearing away to the other world, her face told that she felt her years had been too many in this. Her eldest son, unable, in pride and shame, to lift up his eyes at kirk or market, went away to the city, and enlisted into a regiment about to embark on foreign service. His two sisters went to take farewell of him, but never returned; one, it is said, having died of a fever in the Infirmary, just as if she had been a pauper; and the other—for the sight of sin, and sorrow, and shame, and suffering, is ruinous to the soul—gave herself up, in her beauty, an easy prey to a destroyer, and doubtless has run her course of agonies, and is now at peace. The rest of the family dropt down, one by one, out of sight, into inferior situations in far-off places; but there was a curse, it was thought, hanging over the family, and of none of them did ever a favourable report come to their native parish; while he, the infatuated sinner, whose vice seemed to have worked all the wo,

remained in the chains of his tyrannical passion, nor seemed ever, for more than the short term of a day, to cease hugging them to his heart. Semblance of all that is most venerable in the character of Scotland's peasantry! Image of a perfect patriarch, walking out to meditate at eventide! What a noble forehead! Features how high, dignified, and composed! There, sitting in the shade of that old wayside tree, he seems some religious Missionary, travelling to and fro over the face of the earth, seeking out sin and sorrow, that he may tame them under the word of God, and change their very being into piety and peace. Call him not a hoary hypocrite, for he cannot help that noble—that venerable—that apostolic aspect—that dignified figure, as if bent gently by Time, loath to touch it with too heavy a hand—that holy sprinkling over his furrowed temples of the silver-soft, and the snow-white hair—these are the gifts of gracious Nature all—and Nature will not reclaim them, but in the tomb. That is Gabriel Mason—the Drunkard! And in an hour you may, if your eyes can bear the sight, see and hear him staggering up and down the village, cursing, swearing, preaching, praying—stoned by blackguard boys and girls, who hound all the dogs and curs at his heels, till, taking refuge in the smithy or the pothouse, he becomes the sport of grown clowns, and, after much idiot laughter, ruefully mingled with sighs, and groans, and tears, he is suffered to mount upon a table, and urged, perhaps, by reckless folly to give out a text from the Bible, which is nearly all engraven on his memory—so much and so many other things effaced for ever—and there, like a wild Itinerant, he stammers forth unintentional blasphemy, till the liquor he has been allowed or instigated to swallow, smites him suddenly senseless, and, falling down, he is huddled off into a corner of some lumber-room; and left to sleep—better far for such a wretch were it to death.

Let us descend, then, from that most inclement front, into the lown boundaries of the Holm. The farm-steading covers a goodly portion of the peninsula shaped by the burn, that here looks almost like a river. With its outhouses it forms three sides of a square, and the fourth is composed of a set of jolly stacks, that will keep the thrashing-machine at work during all the winter. The interior of the square rejoices in a glorious dung-hill, (Oh, breathe not the name!) that will cover every field with luxuriant harvests—twelve bolls of oats to the acre. There the cattle—oxen yet "lean, and lank, and brown as is the ribbed sea-sand," will, in a few months, eat themselves up, on straw and turnip, into obesity. There turkeys walk demure—there geese waddle, and there the feathery-legged king of Bantam struts among his seraglio, keeping pertly aloof from double-combed Chanticleer, that squire of dames, crowing to his partlets. There a cloud of pigeons often descends among the corny chaff, and then whirs off to the uplands. No chained mastiff looking grimly from the kennel's mouth, but a set of cheerful and sagacious colleys are seen sitting on their hurdies, or "worrying iner in

diversion." A snaggy colt or two, and a brood mare, with a spice of blood, and a foal at her heels, know their shed, and evidently are favourites with the family. Out comes the master, a rosy-cheeked carle, upwards of six feet high, broad-shouldered, with a blue bonnet and velveteen breeches—a man not to be jostled on the crown o' the causey, and a match for any horse-couper from Bewcastle, or gipsy from Yetholm. But let us into the kitchen. There's the wife—a bit tidy body—and pretty withal—more authoritative in her quiet demeanour than the most tyrannical mere housekeeper that ever thumped a servant lass with the beetle. These three are her daughters. First, Girzie, the eldest, seemingly older than her mother—for she is somewhat hard-favoured, and strong red hair dangling over a squint eye, is apt to give an expression of advanced years, even to a youthful virgin. Vaccination was not known in Girzie's babyhood, but she is, nevertheless, a clean-skinned creature, and her full bosom is white as snow. She is what is delicately called a strapper, rosy-armed as the morning, and not a little of an Aurora about the ankles. She makes her way, in all household affairs, through every impediment, and will obviously prove, whenever the experiment is made, a most excellent wife. Mysie, the second daughter, is more composed, more genteel, and sits sewing, with her a favourite occupation, for she has very neat hands; and is, in fact, the milliner and mantua-maker for all the house. She could no more lift that enormous pan of boiling water off the fire than she could fly, which in the grasp of Girzie is safely landed on the hearth. Mysie has somewhat of a pensive look, as if in love—and we have heard that she is betrothed to young Mr. Rentoul, the divinity student, who lately made a speech before the Anti-patronage Society, and therefore may reasonably expect very soon to get a kirk. But look—there comes dancing in from the ewe-bughts the bright-eyed Bessy, the flower of the flock, the most beautiful girl in Almondale, and fit to be bosom-burd of the Gentle Shepherd himself! Oh that we were a poet, to sing the innocence of her budding breast! But—Heaven preserve us!—what is the angelic creature about! Making rumble-de-thumps! Now she pounds the potatoes and cabbages as with pestle and mortar! Ever and anon licking the butter off her fingers, and then dashing in the salt! Methinks her laugh is out of all bounds loud—and, unless my eyes deceived me, that stout lout whispered in her delicate ear some coarse jest, that made the eloquent blood mount up into her not undelighted countenance. Heavens and earth!—perhaps an assignation in the barn, or byre, or bush aboon Traquair. But the long dresser is set out with dinner—the gudeman's bonnet is reverently laid aside—and if any stomach assembled there be now empty, it is not likely, judging from appearances, that it will be in that state again before next Sabbath—and it is now but the middle of the week. Was it not my Lord Byron who liked not to see women eat? Poo—poo—nonsense! We like to see them not only eat—

but devour. Not a set of teeth round that kitchen-dresser that is not white as the driven snow. Breath too, in spite of syboes, sweet as dawn-dew—the whole female frame full of health, freshness, spirit, and animation! Away all delicate wooers, thrice-high-fantastical! The diet is wholesome—and the sleep will be sound; therefore eat away, Bessy—nor fear to laugh, although your pretty mouth be full—for we are no poet to madden into misanthropy at your mastication; and, in spite of the heartiest meal ever virgin ate, to us these lips are roses still, "thy eyes are lode-stars, and thy breath sweet air." Would for thy sake we had been born a shepherd-groom! No—no—no! For some few joyous years mayest thou wear thy silken snood unharmed, and silence with thy songs the linnet among the broom, at the sweet hour of prime. And then mayest thou plight thy truth—in all the warmth of innocence—to some ardent yet thoughtful youth, who will carry his bride exultingly to his own low-roofed home—toil for her and the children at her knees, through summer's heat and winter's cold—and sit with her in the kirk, when long years have gone by, a comely matron, attended by daughters acknowledged to be fair—but neither so fair, nor so good, nor so pious, as their mother.

What a contrast to the jocund Holm is the **ROWAN-TREE-HUT**—so still, and seemingly so desolate! It is close upon the public road, and yet so low, that you might pass it without observing its turf-roof. There live old Aggy Robinson, the carrier, and her consumptive daughter. Old Aggy has borne that epithet for twenty years, and her daughter is not much under sixty. That poor creature is bedridden and helpless, and has to be fed almost like a child. Old Aggy has for many years had the same white pony—well named Samson—that she drives three times a-week, all the year round, to and from the nearest market-town, carrying all sorts of articles to nearly twenty different families, living miles apart. Every other day in the week—for there is but one Sabbath either to herself or Samson—she drives coals, or peat, or wood, or lime, or stones for the roads. She is clothed in a man's coat, an old rusty beaver, and a red petticoat. Aggy never was a beauty, and now she is almost frightful, with a formidable beard, and a rough voice—and violent gestures, encouraging the overlaid enemy of the Philistines. But as soon as she enters her hut, she is silent, patient, and affectionate, at her daughter's bedside. They sleep on the same chaff-matress, and she hears, during the dead of the night, her daughter's slightest moan. Her voice is not rough at all when the poor old creature is saying her prayers; nor, we may be well assured, is its lowest whisper unheard in heaven.

Your eyes are wandering away to the eastern side of the vale, and they have fixed themselves on the Cottage of the **SEVEN OAKS**. The grove is a noble one; and, indeed, those are the only timber-trees in the valley. There is a tradition belonging to the grove, but we shall tell it some other time; now, we have to do with that mean-looking Cottage, all unworthy of such

magnificent shelter. With its ragged thatch it has a cold cheerless look—almost a look of indigence. The walls are sordid in the streaked ochre-wash—a wisp of straw supplies the place of a broken pane—the door seems as if it were inhospitable—and every object about is in untended disorder. The green pool in front, with its floating straws and feathers, and miry edge, is at once unhealthy and needless; the hedgerows are full of gaps, and open at the roots; the few garments spread upon them seem to have stiffened in the weather, forgotten by the persons who placed them there; and half-starved young cattle are straying about in what once was a garden. Wretched sight it is; for that dwelling, although never beautiful, was once the tidiest and best-kept in all the district. But what has misery to do with the comfort of its habitation?

The owner of that house was once a man well to do in the world; but he minded this world's goods more than it was fitting to do, and made Mammon his god. Abilities he possessed far beyond the common run of men, and he applied them all, with all the energy of a strong mind, to the accumulation of wealth. Every rule of his life had that for its ultimate end; and he despised a bargain unless he outwitted his neighbour. Without any acts of downright knavery, he was not an honest man—hard to the poor—and a tyrannical master. He sought to wring from the very soil more than it could produce; his servants, among whom were his wife and daughter, he kept at work, like slaves, from twilight to twilight; and was a forestaller and a regrater—a character which, when Political Economy was unknown, was of all the most odious in the judgment of simple husbandmen. His spirits rose with the price of meal, and every handful dealt out to the beggar was paid like a tax. What could the Bible teach to such a man? What good could he derive from the calm air of the house of worship? He sent his only son to the city, with injunctions instilled into him to make the most of all transactions, at every hazard but that of his money; and the consequence was, in a few years, shame, ruin, and expatriation. His only daughter, imprisoned, dispirited, enthralled, fell a prey to a vulgar seducer; and being driven from her father's house, abandoned herself, in hopeless misery, to a life of prostitution. His wife, heartbroken by cruelty and affliction, was never afterwards altogether in her right mind, and now sits weeping by the hearth, or wanders off to distant places, lone houses and villages, almost in the condition of an idiot—wild-eyed, loose-haired, and dressed like a very beggar. Speculation after speculation failed—with farm-yard crowded with old stacks, he had to curse three successive plentiful harvests—and his mailing was now destitute. The unhappy man grew sour, stern, fierce, in his calamity; and, when his brain was inflamed with liquor, a dangerous madman. He is now a sort of cattle-dealer—buys and sells miserable horses—and at fairs associates with knaves and reprobates, knowing that no honest man will deal with him except in pity or derision. He has more than once attempted to commit

suicide; but palsy has stricken him—and in a few weeks he will totter into the grave.

There is a Cottage in that hollow, and you see the smoke—even the chimney-top, but you could not see the Cottage itself, unless you were within fifty yards of it, so surrounded is it with knolls and small green eminences, in a den of its own, a shoot or scion from the main stem of the valley. It is called *THE BROOM*, and there is something singular, and not uninteresting, in the history of its owner. He married very early in life, indeed when quite a boy, which is not, by the way, very unusual among the peasantry of Scotland, prudent and calculating as is their general character. David Drysdale, before he was thirty years of age, had a family of seven children, and a pretty family they were as might be seen in all the parish. His life was in theirs, and his mind never wandered far from his fireside. His wife was of a consumptive family, and that insidious and fatal disease never showed in her a single symptom during ten years of marriage; but one cold evening awoke it at her very heart, and in less than two months it hurried her into the grave. Poor creature, such a spectre! When her husband used to carry her, for the sake of a little temporary relief, from chair to couch, and from her couch back again to her bed, twenty times in a day, he hardly could help weeping, with all his consideration, to feel her frame as light as a bundle of leaves. The medical man said, that in all his practice he never had known soul and body keep together in such utter attenuation. But her soul was as clear as ever while racking pain was in her fleshless bones. Even he, her loving husband, was relieved from wo when she expired; for no sadness, no sorrow, could be equal to the misery of groans from one so patient and so resigned. Perhaps consumption is infectious—so, at least, it seemed here; for first one child began to droop, and then another—the elder ones first; and, within the two following years, there were almost as many funerals from this one house as from all the others in the parish. Yes—they all died—of the whole family not one was spared. Two, indeed, were thought to have pined away in a sort of fearful foreboding—and a fever took off a third—but four certainly died of the same hereditary complaint with the mother; and now not a voice was heard in the house. He did not desert the Broom; and the farm-work was still carried on, nobody could tell how. The servants, to be sure, knew their duty, and often performed it without orders. Sometimes the master put his hand to the plough, but oftener he led the life of a shepherd, and was by himself among the hills. He never smiled—and at every meal he still sat like a man about to be led out to die. But what will not retire away—recede—disappear from the vision of the souls of us mortals! Tenacious as we are of our griefs, even more than of our joys, both elude our grasp. We gaze after them with longings or self-upbraiding aspirations for their return; but they are shadows, and like shadows vanish. Then human duties, lowly though they may be, have their sanative and salutary

influence on our whole frame of being. Without their performance conscience cannot be still; with it, conscience brings peace in extremity of evil. Then occupation kills grief, and industry abates passion. No balm for sorrow like the sweat of the brow poured into the furrows of the earth, in the open air, and beneath the sunshine of heaven. These truths were felt by the childless widower, long before they were understood by him; and when two years had gone drearily, ay dismally, almost despairingly, by—he began at times to feel something like happiness again when sitting among his friends in the kirk, or at their firesides, or in the labours of the field, or even on the market-day, among this world's concerns. Thus, they who knew him and his sufferings, were pleased to recognise what might be called resignation and its grave tranquillity; while strangers discerned in him nothing more than a staid and solemn demeanour, which might be natural to many a man never severely tried, and offering no interruption to the cheerfulness that pervaded their ordinary life.

He had a cousin a few years younger than himself, who had also married when a girl, and when little more than a girl had been left a widow. Her parents were both dead, and she had lived for a good many years as an upper servant, or rather companion and friend, in the house of a relation. As cousins, they had all their lives been familiar and affectionate, and Alice Gray had frequently lived months at a time at the Broom, taking care of the children, and in all respects one of the family. Their conditions were now almost equally desolate, and a deep sympathy made them now more firmly attached than they ever could have been in better days. Still, nothing at all resembling love was in either of their hearts, nor did the thought of marriage ever pass across their imaginations. They found, however, increasing satisfaction in each other's company; and looks and words of sad and sober endearment gradually bound them together in affection stronger far than either could have believed. Their friends saw and spoke of the attachment, and of its probable result, long before they were aware of its full nature; and nobody was surprised, but, on the contrary, all were well pleased, when it was understood that they were to be man and wife. There was something almost mournful in their marriage—no rejoicing—no merry-making—but yet visible symptoms of gratitude, contentment, and peace. An air of cheerfulness was not long of investing the melancholy Broom—the very swallows twittered more gladly from the window-corners, and there was joy in the cooing of the pigeons on the sunny roof. The farm awoke through all its fields, and the farm-servants once more sang and whistled at their work. The wandering beggar, who remembered the charity of other years, looked with no cold expression on her who now dealt out his dole; and, as his old eyes were dimmed for the sake of those who were gone, gave a fervent blessing on the new mistress of the house, and prayed that she might long be spared. The neighbours, even they who had

best loved the dead, came in with cheerful countenances, and acknowledged in their hearts that since change is the law of life, there was no one, far or near, whom they could have borne to see sitting in that chair but Alice Gray. The husband knew their feelings from their looks, and his fireside blazed once more with a cheerful lustre.

O gentle reader, young perhaps, and inexperienced of this world, wonder not at this so great change! The heart is full, perhaps, of a pure and holy affection, nor can it die, even for an hour of sleep. May it never die but in the grave! Yet die it may, and leave thee blameless. The time may come when that bosom, now thy Elysium, will awaken not, with all its heaving beauty, one single passionate or adoring sigh. Those eyes, that now stream agitation and bliss into thy throbbing heart, may, on some not very distant day, be cold to thy imagination, as the distant and unheeded stars. That voice, now thrilling through every nerve, may fall on thy ear a disregarded sound. Other hopes, other fears, other troubles, may possess thee wholly—and that more than angel of Heaven seem to fade away into a shape of earth's most common clay. But here there was no change—no forgetfulness—no oblivion—no faithlessness to a holy trust. The melancholy man often saw his Hannah, and all his seven sweet children—now fair in life—now pale in death. Sometimes, perhaps, the sight, the sound—their smiles and their voices—disturbed him, till his heart quaked within him, and he wished that he too was dead. But God it was who had removed them from our earth—and was it possible to doubt that they were all in blessedness? Shed your tears over change from virtue to vice, happiness to misery; but weep not for those still, sad, mysterious processes by which gracious Nature alleviates the afflictions of our mortal lot, and enables us to endure the life which the Lord our God hath given us. Ere long, husband and wife could bear to speak of those who were now no more seen; when the phantoms rose before them in the silence of the night, they all wore pleasant and approving countenances, and the beautiful family often came from Heaven to visit their father in his dreams. He did not wish, much less hope, in this life, for such happiness as had once been his—nor did Alice Gray, even for one hour, imagine that such happiness it was in her power to bestow. They knew each other's hearts—what they had suffered and survived; and, since the meridian of life and joy was gone, they were contented with the pensive twilight.

Look, there is a pretty Cottage—by name LEASIDE—one that might almost do for a painter—just sufficiently shaded by trees, and showing a new aspect every step you take, and each new aspect beautiful. There is, it is true, neither moss, nor lichens, nor weather-stains on the roof—but all is smooth, neat, trim, deep thatch, from rigging to eaves, with a picturesque elevated window covered with the same material, and all the walls white as snow. The whole building is at all times as fresh as if just washed by a vernal shower. Compe-

tence breathes from every lattice, and that porch has been reared more for ornament than defence, although, no doubt, it is useful both in March and November winds. Every field about it is like a garden, and yet the garden is brightly conspicuous amidst all the surrounding cultivation. The hedgerows are all clipped, for they have grown there for many and many a year; and the shears were necessary to keep them down from shutting out the vista of the lovely vale. That is the dwelling of Adam Airlie the Elder. Happy old man! This life has gone uniformly well with him and his; yet, had it been otherwise, there is a power in his spirit that would have sustained the severest inflictions of Providence. His gratitude to God is something solemn and awful, and ever accompanied with a profound sense of his utter unworthiness of all the long-continued mercies vouchsafed to his family. His own happiness, prolonged to a great age, has not closed within his heart one source of pity or affection for his brethren of mankind. In his own guiltless conscience, guiltless before man, he yet feels incessantly the frailties of his nature, and is meek, humble, and penitent as the greatest sinner. He, his wife, an old faithful female servant, and an occasional grand-daughter, now form the whole household. His three sons have all prospered in the world. The eldest went abroad when a mere boy, and many fears went with him—a bold, adventurous, and somewhat reckless creature. But consideration came to him in a foreign climate, and tamed down his ardent mind to a thoughtful, not a selfish prudence. Twenty years he lived in India—and what a blessed day was the day of his return! Yet in the prime of life, by disease unbroken, and with a heart full to overflowing with all its old sacred affections, he came back to his father's lowly cottage, and wept as he crossed the threshold. His parents needed not any of his wealth; but they were blamelessly proud, nevertheless, of his honest acquisitions—proud when he became a landholder in his native parish, and employed the sons of his old companions, and some of his old companions themselves, in the building of his unostentatious mansion, or in cultivating the wild but not unlovely moor, which was dear to him for the sake of the countless remembrances that clothed the bare banks of its lochs, and murmured in the little stream that ran among the pastoral braes. The new mansion is a couple of miles from his parental Cottage; but not a week, indeed seldom half that time, elapses, without a visit to that dear dwelling. They likewise not unfrequently visit him—for his wife is dear to them as a daughter of their own; and the ancient couple delight in the noise and laughter of his pretty flock. Yet the son understands perfectly well that the aged people love best their own roof—and that its familiar quiet is every day dearer to their habituated affections. Therefore he makes no parade of filial tenderness—forces nothing new upon them—is glad to see the uninterrupted tenor of their humble happiness; and if they are proud of him, which all the parish knows, so is there not a child within its bounds that does not know that Mr. Airlie, the rich gentle-

man from India, loves his poor father and mother as tenderly as if he had never left their roof; and is prouder of them, too, than if they were clothed in fine raiment, and fared sumptuously every day. Mr. Airlie of the Mount has his own seat in the gallery of the Kirk—his father, as an Elder, sits below the pulpit—but occasionally the pious and proud son joins his mother in the pew, where he and his brothers sat long ago; and every Sabbath one or other of his children takes its place beside the venerated matron. The old man generally leaves the churchyard leaning on his Gilbert's arm—and although the sight has long been so common as to draw no attention, yet no doubt there is always an under and unconscious pleasure in many a mind witnessing the sacredness of the bond of blood. Now and then the old matron is prevailed upon, when the weather is bad and roads miry, to take a seat home in the carriage—but the Elder always prefers walking thither with his son, and he is stout and hale, although upwards of threescore and ten years.

Walter, the second son, is now a captain in the navy, having served for years before the mast. His mind is in his profession, and he is perpetually complaining of being unemployed—a ship—a ship, is still the burden of his song. But when at home—which he often is for weeks together—he attaches himself to all the ONGOINGS of rural life, as devotedly as if a plougher of the soil instead of the sea. His mother wonders, with tears in her eyes, why, having a competency, he should still wish to provoke the dangers of the deep; and beseeches him sometimes to become a farmer in his native vale. And perhaps more improbable things have happened; for the captain, it is said, has fallen desperately in love with the daughter of the clergyman of a neighbouring parish, and the doctor will not give his consent to the marriage, unless he promise to live, if allowed, on shore. The political state of Europe certainly seems at present favourable to the consummation of the wishes of all parties.

Of David, the third son, who has not heard, that has heard any thing of the pulpit eloquence of Scotland!—Should his life be spared, there can be no doubt that he will one day or other be Moderator of the General Assembly, perhaps Professor of Divinity in a College. Be that as it may, a better Christian never expounded the truths of the gospel, although some folks pretend to say that he is not evangelical. He is, however, beloved by the poor—the orphan and the widow; and his ministrations, powerful in the kirk to a devoutly listening congregation, are so too at the sick-bed, when only two or three are gathered around it, and when the dying man feels how a fellow-creature can, by scriptural aids, strengthen his trust in the mercy of his Maker.

Every year, on each birthday of their sons, the old people hold a festival—in May, in August, and at Christmas. The sailor alone looks disconsolate as a bachelor, but that reproach will be wiped away before autumn—and should God grant the cottagers a few more years, some new faces will yet smile upon the

holydays; and there is in their unwithered hearts warm love enough for all that may join the party. We too—yes, gentle reader—we too shall be there—as we have often been during the last ten years—and you yourself will judge, from all you know of us, whether or no we have a heart to understand and enjoy such rare felicity.

But let us be off to the mountains, and endeavour to interest our beloved reader in a Highland Cottage—in any one, taken at hap-hazard, from a hundred. You have been roaming all day among the mountains, and perhaps seen no house except at a dwindling distance. Probably you have wished not to see any house, but a ruined shieling—a deserted hut—or an unroofed and dilapidated shed for the outlying cattle of some remote farm. But now the sun has inflamed all the western heaven, and darkness will soon descend. There is now a muteness more stern and solemn than during unfaded daylight. List—the faint, far-off, subterranean sound of the bagpipe! Some old soldier, probably, playing a gathering or a coronach. The narrow dell widens and widens into a great glen, in which you just discern the blue gleam of a loch. The martial music is more distinctly heard—loud, fitful, fierce, like the trampling of men in battle. Where is the piper? In a cave, or within the Fairies' Knowe? At the door of a hut. His eyes were extinguished by ophthalmia, and there he sits, fronting the sunlight, stone-blind. Long silver hair flows down his broad shoulders, and you perceive that, when he rises, he will rear up a stately bulk. The music stops, and you hear the bleating of goats. There they come, prancing down the rocks, and stare upon the stranger. The old soldier turns himself towards the voice of the Sassenach, and, with the bold courtesy of the camp, bids him enter the hut. One minute's view has sufficed to imprint the scene for ever on the memory—a hut whose turf-walls and roof are incorporated with the living mountain, and seem not the work of man's hand, but the casual architecture of some convulsion—the tumbling down of fragments from the mountain side by raging torrents, or a partial earthquake; for all the scenery about is torn to pieces—like the scattering of some wide ruin. The imagination dreams of the earliest days of our race, when men harboured, like the other creatures, in places provided by nature. But even here, there are visible traces of cultivation working in the spirit of a mountainous region—a few glades of the purest verdure opened out among the tall brackens, with a birch-tree or two dropped just where the eye of taste could have wished, had the painter planted the sapling, instead of the winds of heaven having wafted thither the seed—a small croft of barley, surrounded by a cairn-like wall, made up of stones cleared from the soil, and a patch of potatoe ground, neat almost as the garden that shows in a nook its fruit-bushes and a few flowers. All the blasts that ever blew must be unavailing against the briery rock that shelters the hut from the air of storms; and the smoke may rise under its lee, unwavering on the windiest day. There is sweetness in

all the air, and the glen is noiseless, except with the uncertain murmur of the now unswollen waterfalls. That is the croak of the raven sitting on his cliff halfway up Ben-Oura; and hark, the last belling of the red-deer, as the herd lies down in the mist among the last ridge of heather, blending with the shrubless stones, rocks, and cliffs that girdle the upper regions of the vast mountain.

Within the dimness of that hut you hear greetings in the Gaelic tongue, in a female voice; and when the eye has by and by become able to endure the smoke, it discerns—the household—the veteran's ancient dame—a young man that may be his son, or rather his grandson, but whom you soon know to be neither, with black matted locks, the keen eye, and the light limbs of the hunter—a young woman, his wife, suckling a child, and yet with a girlish look, as if but one year before her silken snood had been untied—and a lassie of ten years, who had brought home the goats, and now sits timidly in a nook eyeing the stranger. The low growl of the huge, brindled stag-hound had been hushed by a word on your first entrance, and the noble animal watches his master's eye, which he obeys in his freedom throughout all the forest-chase. A napkin is taken out of an old worm-eaten chest, and spread over a strangely-carved table, that seems to have belonged once to a place of pride; and the hungry and thirsty stranger scarcely knows which most to admire, the broad bannocks of barley-meal and the huge roll of butter, or the giant bottle, whose mouth exhales the strong savour of conquering Glenlivet. The board is spread—why not fall to and eat? First be thanks given to the Lord God Almighty. The blind man holds up his hand and prays in a low chanting voice, and then breaks bread for the lips of the stranger. On such an occasion is felt the sanctity of the meal shared by human beings brought accidentally together—the salt is sacred—and the hearth an altar.

No great travellers are we, yet have we seen something of this habitable globe. The Highlands of Scotland is but a small region, nor is its interior by any means so remote as the interior of Africa. Yet 'tis remote. The life of that very blind veteran might, in better hands than ours, make an interesting history. In his youth he had been a shepherd—a herdsman—a hunter—something even of a poet. For thirty years he had been a soldier—in many climates and many conflicts. Since first he bloodied his bayonet, how many of his comrades had been buried in heaps! flung into trenches dug on the field of battle! How many famous captains had shone in the blaze of their fame—faded into the light of common day—died in obscurity, and been utterly forgotten! What fierce passions must have agitated the frame of that now calm old man! On what dreadful scenes, when forts and towns were taken by storm, must those eyes, now withered into nothing, have glared with all the fury of man's most wrathful soul! Now peace is with him for evermore. Nothing to speak of the din of battle, but his own pipes wailing or raging among the hollow of the mountains.

In relation to his campaigning career, his present life is as the life of another state. The pageantry of war has all rolled off and away for ever; all its actions but phantoms now of a dimly-remembered dream. He thinks of his former self, as sergeant in the Black Watch, and almost imagines he beholds another man. In his long, long blindness, he has created another world to himself out of new voices—the voices of new generations, and of torrents thundering all year long round about his hut. Almost all the savage has been tamed within him, and an awful religion falls deeper and deeper upon him, as he knows how he is nearing the grave. Often his whole mind is dim, for he is exceedingly old, and then he sees only fragments of his youthful life—the last forty years are as if they had never been—and he hears shouts and huzzas, that half a century ago rent the air with victory. He can still chant, in a hoarse broken voice, battle-hymns and dirges; and thus, strangely forgetful and strangely tenacious of the past, linked to this life by ties that only the mountaineer can know, and yet feeling himself on the brink of the next, Old Blind Donald Roy, the Giant of the Hut of the Three Torrents, will not scruple to quaff the “strong waters,” till his mind is awakened—brightened—dimmed—darkened—and seemingly extinguished—till the sunrise again smites him, as he lies in a heap among the heather; and then he lifts up, unshamed and remorseless, that head, which, with its long quiet hairs, a painter might choose for the image of a saint about to become a martyr.

We leave old Donald asleep, and go with his son-in-law, Lewis of the light-foot, and Maida the stag-hound, surnamed the Throtler,

“Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trod,
To his hills that encircle the sea.”

We have been ascending mountain-range after mountain-range, before sunrise; and lo! night is gone, and nature rejoices in the day through all her solitudes. Still as death, yet as life cheerful—and unspeakable grandeur in the sudden revelation. Where is the wild-deer herd?—where, ask the keen eyes of Maida, is the forest of antlers!—Lewis of the light-foot bounds before, with his long gun pointing towards the mists now gathered up to the summits of Benevis.

Nightfall—and we are once more at the Hut of the Three Torrents. Small Amy is grown familiar now, and, almost without being asked, sings us the choicest of her Gaelic airs—a few too of Lowland melody: all merry, yet all sad—if in smiles begun, ending in a shower—or at least a tender mist of tears. Heard’st thou ever such a syren as this Celtic child? Did we not always tell you that fairies were indeed realities of the twilight or moonlight world? And she is their Queen. Hark! what thunders of applause! The waterfall at the head of the great Corrie thunders *encore* with a hundred echoes. But the songs are over, and the small singer gone to her heather-bed. There is a Highland moon!—The shield of an unfallen arch-angel. There are not many stars—but those two—ay, that One, is sufficient to sustain the glory of the night. Be not alarmed at that

low, wide, solemn, and melancholy sound. Runlets, torrents, rivers, lochs, and seas—reeds, heather, forests, caves, and cliffs, all are sound, sounding together a choral anthem.

Gracious heavens! what mistakes people have fallen into when writing about Solitude! A man leaves a town for a few months, and goes with his wife and family, and a travelling library, into some solitary glen. Friends are perpetually visiting him from afar, or the neighbouring gentry leaving their cards, while his servant-boy rides daily to the post-village for his letters and newspapers. And call you that solitude? The whole world is with you, morning, noon, and night. But go by yourself, without book or friend, and live a month in this hut at the head of Glenevis. Go at dawn among the cliffs of yonder pine-forest, and wait there till night hangs her moon-lamp in heaven. Commune with your own soul, and be still. Let the images of departed years rise, phantom-like, of their own awful accord from the darkness of your memory, and pass away into the wood-gloom or the mountain-mist. Will conscience dread such spectres? Will you quake before them, and bow down your head on the mossy root of some old oak, and sob in the stern silence of the moon-lit place? Thoughts, feelings, passions, spectral deeds, will come rushing around your lair, as with the sound of the wings of innumerable birds—ay, many of them like birds of prey, to gnaw your very heart. How many duties undischarged! How many opportunities neglected! How many pleasures devoured! How many sins hugged! How many wickednesses perpetrated! The desert looks more grim—the heaven lowers—and the sun, like God’s own eye, stares in upon your conscience!

But such is not the solitude of our beautiful young shepherd-girl of the Hut of the Three Torrents. Her soul is as clear, as calm as the pool pictured at times by the floating clouds that let fall their shadows through among the overhanging birch-trees. What harm could she ever do? What harm could she ever think. She may have wept—for there is sorrow without sin; may have wept even at her prayers—for there is penitence free from guilt, and innocence itself often kneels in contrition. Down the long glen she accompanies the stream to the house of God—sings her psalms—and returns wearied to her heather-bed. She is, indeed, a solitary child; the eagle, and the raven, and the red-deer see that she is so—and echo knows it when from her airy cliff she repeats the happy creature’s song. Her world is within this one glen. In this one glen she may live all her days—be wooed, won, wedded, buried. Buried—said we? Oh, why think of burial when gazing on that resplendent head? Intermittent tracts of the shining day await her, the lonely darling of nature; nor dare Time ever eclipse the lustre of those wild-beaming eyes! Her beauty shall be immortal, like that of her country’s fairies. So, Flower of the Wilderness, we wave towards thee a joyful—though an everlasting farewell.

Where are we now? There is not on this round green earth a lovelier Loch than Achray. About a mile above Loch Vennachar and as

we approach the Brigg of Turk, we arrive at the summit of an eminence, whence we descry the sudden and wide prospect of the windings of the river that issues from Loch Achray—and the Loch itself reposing—sleeping—dreaming on its pastoral, its silvan bed. Achray, being interpreted, signifies the “Level Field,” and gives its name to a delightful farm at the west end. On “that happy, rural seat of various view,” could we lie all day long; and as all the beauty tends towards the west, each afternoon hour deepens and also brightens it into mellow splendour. Not to keep constantly seeing the lovely Loch is indeed impossible—yet its still waters soothe the soul, without holding it away from the woods and cliffs, that forming of themselves a perfect picture, are yet all united with the mountainous region of the setting sun. Many long years have elapsed—at our time of life ten are many—since we passed one delightful evening in the hospitable house that stands near the wooden bridge over the Teith, just wheeling into Loch Achray. What a wilderness of wooded rocks, containing a thousand little mossy glens, each large enough for a fairy’s kingdom! Between and Loch Katrine is the Place of Roes—nor need the angler try to penetrate the underwood; for every shallow, every linn, every pool is overshadowed by its own canopy, and the living fly and moth alone ever dip their wings in the chequered waters. Safe there are all the little singing birds, from hawk or glead—and it is indeed an Aviary in the wild. Pine-groves stand here and there amid the natural woods—and among their tall gloom the cushat sits crooning in beloved solitude, rarely startled by human footstep, and bearing at his own pleasure through the forest the sound of his flapping wings.

But let us arise from the greensward, and before we pace along the sweet shores of Loch Achray, for its nearest murmur is yet more than a mile off, turn away up from the Brigg of Turk into Glenfinglas. A strong mountain-torrent, in which a painter, even with the soul of Salvator Rosa, might find studies inexhaustible for years, tumbles on the left of a ravine, in which a small band of warriors might stop the march of a numerous host. With what a loud voice it brawls through the silence, freshening the hazels, the birches, and the oaks, that in that perpetual spray need not the dew’s refreshment. But the savage scene softens as you advance, and you come out of that silvan prison into a plain of meadows and corn-fields, alive with the peaceful dwellings of industrious men. Here the bases of the mountains, and even their sides high up, are without neather—a rich sward, with here and there a deep bed of brackens, and a little sheep-sheltering grove. Skeletons of old trees of prodigious size lie covered with mosses and wild-flowers, or stand with their barkless trunks and white limbs unmoved when the tempest blows. Glenfinglas was anciently a deer-forest of the Kings of Scotland; but hunter’s horn no more awakens the echoes of Benledi.

A more beautiful vale never inspired pastoral poet in Arcadia, nor did Sicilian shepherds of old ever pipe to each other for prize

of oaten reed, in a lovelier nook than where yonder cottage stands, shaded, but scarcely sheltered, by a few birch-trees. It is in truth not a cottage—but a very SHIELING, part of the knoll adhering to the side of the mountain. Not another dwelling—even as small as itself—within a mile in any direction. Those goats that seem to walk where there is no footing along the side of the cliff, go of themselves to be milked at evening to a house beyond the hill, without any barking dog to set them home. There are many footpaths, but all of sheep, except one leading through the coppice-wood to the distant kirk. The angler seldom disturbs those shallows, and the heron has them to himself, watching often with motionless neck all day long. Yet the Shielling is inhabited, and has been so by the same person for a good many years. You might look at it for hours, and yet see no one so much as moving to the door. But a little smoke hovers over it—very faint if it be smoke at all—and nothing else tells that within is life.

It is inhabited by a widow, who once was the happiest of wives, and lived far down the glen, where it is richly cultivated, in a house astrir with many children. It so happened, that in the course of nature, without any extraordinary bereavements, she outlived all the household, except one, on whom fell the saddest affliction that can befall a human being—the utter loss of reason. For some years after the death of her husband, and all her other children, this son was her support; and there was no occasion to pity them in their poverty, where all were poor. Her natural cheerfulness never forsook her; and although fallen back in the world, and obliged in her age to live without many comforts she once had known, yet all the past gradually was softened into peace, and the widow and her son were in that shieling as happy as any family in the parish. He worked at all kinds of work without, and she sat spinning from morning to night within—a constant occupation, soothing to one before whose mind past times might otherwise have come too often, and that creates contentment by its undisturbed sameness and invisible progression. If not always at meals, the widow saw her son for an hour or two every night, and throughout the whole Sabbath-day. They slept, too, under one roof; and she liked the stormy weather when the rains were on—for then he found some ingenious employment within the shieling, or cheered her with some book lent by a friend, or with the lively or plaintive music of his native hills. Sometimes, in her gratitude, she said that she was happier now than when she had so many other causes to be so; and when occasionally an acquaintance dropt in upon her, her face gave a welcome that spoke more than resignation; nor was she averse to partake the sociaty of the other huts, and sat sedate among youthful merriment, when summer or winter festival came round, and poverty rejoiced in the riches of content and innocence.

But her trials, great as they had been, were not yet over; for this her only son was laid prostrate by fever—and, when it left his body, he survived hopelessly stricken in mind. His eyes, so clear and intelligent, were now fixed

in idiocy, or rolled about unobserving of all objects living or dead. To him all weather seemed the same, and if suffered, he would have lain down like a creature void of understanding, in rain or on snow, nor been able to find his way back for many paces from the hut. As all thought and feeling had left him, so had speech, all but a moaning as of pain or woe, which none but a mother could bear to hear without shuddering—but she heard it during night as well as day, and only sometimes lifted up her eyes as in prayer to God. An offer was made to send him to a place where the afflicted were taken care of; but she beseeched charity for the first time for such alms as would enable her, along with the earnings of her wheel, to keep her son in the shieling; and the means were given her from many quarters to do so decently, and with all the comforts that other eyes observed, but of which the poor object himself was insensible and unconscious. Henceforth, it may almost be said, she never more saw the sun, nor heard the torrents roar. She went not to the kirk, but kept her Sabbath where the paralytic lay—and there she sung the lonely psalm, and said the lonely prayer, unheard in Heaven as many repining spirits would have thought—but it was not so; for in two years there came a meaning to his eyes, and he found a few words of imperfect speech, among which was that of “Mother.” Oh! how her heart burned within her, to know that her face was at last recognised! To feel that her kiss was returned, and to see the first tear that trickled from eyes that long had ceased to weep! Day after day, the darkness that covered his brain grew less and less deep—to her that bewilderment gave the blessedness of hope; for her son now knew that he had an immortal soul, and in the evening joined faintly and feebly and erringly in prayer. For weeks afterwards he remembered only events and scenes long past and distant—and believed that his father, and all his brothers and sisters, were yet alive. He called upon them by their names to come and kiss him—on them, who had all long been buried in the dust. But his soul struggled itself into reason and remembrance—and he at last said, “Mother! did some accident befall me yesterday at my work down the glen?—I feel weak, and about to die!” The shadows of death were indeed around him; but he lived to be told much of what had happened—and rendered up a perfectly unclouded spirit into the mercy of his Saviour. His mother felt that all her prayers had been granted in that one boon—and, when the coffin was borne away from the shieling, she remained in it with a friend, assured that in this world there could for her be no more grief. And there in that same shieling, now that years have gone by, she still lingers, visited as often as she wishes by her poor neighbours—for to the poor sorrow is a sacred thing—who, by turns, send one of their daughters to stay with her, and cheer a life that cannot be long, but that, end when it may, will be laid down without one impious misgiving, and in the humility of a Christian’s faith.

The scene shifts of itself, and we are at the head of Glenetive. Who among all the High-

land maidens that danced on the greenswards among the blooming heather on the mountains of Glenetive—who so fair as Flora, the only daughter of the King’s Forester, and grandchild to the Bard famous for his songs of Fairies in the Hill of Peace, and the Mermaid-Queen in her Palace of Emerald floating far down beneath the foam-waves of the sea? And who, among all the Highland youth that went abroad to the bloody wars from the base of Benevis, to compare with Ranald of the Red-Cliff, whose sires had been soldiers for centuries, in the days of the dagger and Lochaber axe—stately in his strength amid the battle as the oak in a storm, but gentle in peace as the birch-tree, that whispers with all its leaves to the slightest summer-breath? If their love was great when often fed at the light of each other’s eyes, what was it when Ranald was far off among the sands of Egypt, and Flora left an orphan to pine away in her native glen? Beneath the shadow of the Pyramids he dreamt of Dalness and the deer forest, that was the dwelling of his love—and she, as she stood by the murmurs of that sea-loch, longed for the wings of the osprey, that she might flee away to the war-tents beyond the ocean, and be at rest!

But years—a few years—long and lingering as they might seem to loving hearts separated by the roar of seas—yet all too, too short when ’tis thought how small a number lead from the cradle to the grave—brought Ranald and Flora once more into each other’s arms. Alas! for the poor soldier! for never more was he to behold that face from which he kissed the trickling tears. Like many another gallant youth, he had lost his eyesight from the sharp burning sand—and was led to the shieling of his love like a wandering mendicant who obeys the hand of a child. Nor did his face bear that smile of resignation usually so affecting on the calm countenances of the blind. Seldom did he speak—and his sighs were deeper, longer, and more disturbed than those which almost any sorrow ever wrings from the young. Could it be that he groaned in remorse over some secret crime?

Happy—completely happy, would Flora have been to have tended him like a sister all his dark life long, or, like a daughter, to have sat beside the bed of one whose hair was getting fast gray, long before its time. Almost all her relations were dead, and almost all her friends away to other glens. But he had returned, and blindness, for which there was no hope, must bind his steps for ever within little room. But they had been betrothed almost from her childhood, and would she—if he desired it—fear to become his wife now, shrouded as he was, now and for ever in the helpless dark? From his lips, however, her maidenly modesty required that the words should come, nor could she sometimes help wondering, in half-upbraiding sorrow, that Ranald joyed not in his great affliction to claim her for his wife. Poor were they to be sure—yet not so poor as to leave life without its comforts; and in every glen of her native Highlands, were there no worthy families far poorer than they? But weeks, months, passed on, and Ranald re-

mained in a neighbouring hut, shunning the sunshine, and moaning, it was said, when he thought none were near, both night and day. Sometimes he had been overheard muttering to himself lamentable words—and, blind as his eyes were to all the objects of the real world, it was rumoured up and down the glen, that he saw visions of woful events about to befall one whom he loved.

One midnight he found his way, unguided, like a man walking in his sleep—but although in a hideous trance, he was yet broad awake—to the hut where Flora dwelt, and called on her, in a dirge-like voice, to speak a few words with him ere he died. They sat down together among the heather, on the very spot where the farewell embrace had been given the morning he went away to the wars; and Flora's heart died within her, when he told her that the Curse under which his forefathers had suffered, had fallen upon him; and that he had seen his wraith pass by in a shroud, and heard a voice whisper the very day he was to die.

And was it Ranauld of the Red-Cliff, the bravest of the brave, that thus shuddered in the fear of death like a felon at the tolling of the great prison-bell? Ay, death is dreadful when foreseen by a ghastly superstition. He felt the shroud already bound round his limbs and body with gentle folds, beyond the power of a giant to burst; and day and night the

same vision yawned before him—an open grave in the corner of the hill burial-ground without any kirk.

Flora knew that his days were indeed numbered; for when had he ever been afraid of death—and could his spirit have quailed thus under a mere common dream? Soon was she to be all alone in this world; yet when Ranauld should die, she felt that her own days would not be many, and there was sudden and strong comfort in the belief that they would be buried in one grave.

Such were her words to the dying man; and all at once he took her in his arms, and asked her "If she had no fears of the narrow house?" His whole nature seemed to undergo a change under the calm voice of her reply; and he said, "Dost thou fear not then, my Flora, to hear the words of doom?" "Blessed will they be, if in death we be not disunited." "Thou too, my wife—for my wife thou now art on earth, and mayest be so in heaven—thou too, Flora, wert seen shrouded in that apparition." It was a gentle and gracious summer night—so clear, that the shepherds on the hills were scarcely sensible of the morning's dawn. And there, at earliest daylight, were Ranauld and Flora found, on the greensward, among the tall heather, lying side by side, with their calm faces up to heaven, and never more to smile or weep in this mortal world.

AN HOUR'S TALK ABOUT POETRY.

Ours is a poetical age; but has it produced one Great Poem? Not one.

Just look at them for a moment. There is the Pleasures of Memory—an elegant, graceful, beautiful, pensive, and pathetic poem, which it does one's eyes good to gaze on—one's ears good to listen to—one's very fingers good to touch, so smooth is the versification and the wire-wove paper. Never will the Pleasures of Memory be forgotten till the world is in its dotage. But is it a Great Poem? About as much so as an ant-hill, prettily grass-grown and leaf-strewn, is a mountain purple with heather and golden with woods. It is a symmetrical erection—in the shape of a cone—and the apex points heavenwards; but 'tis not a sky-piercer. You take it at a nup—and pursue your journey. Yet it endures. For the rains and the dews, and the airs, and the sunshine, love the fairy knoll, and there it greens and blossoms delicately and delightfully; you hardly know whether a work of art or a work of nature.

Then, there is the poetry of Crabbe. We hear it is not very popular. If so, then neither is human life. For of all our poets, he has most skillfully woven the web and woven the woof of all his compositions with the materials of human life—homespun indeed; but though often coarse, always strong—and though set to plain patterns, yet not unfrequently exceeding fine is the old weaver's workmanship. Ay

--hold up the product of his loom between your eye and the light, and it glows and glimmers like the peacock's back or the breast of the rainbow. Sometimes it seems to be but of the "hadden gray;" when sunbeam or shadow smites it, and lo! it is burnished like the regal purple. But did the Boroughmonger ever produce a Great Poem? You might as well ask if he built St. Paul's.

Breathes not the man with a more poetical temperament than Bowles. No wonder that his old eyes are still so lustrous; for they possess the sacred gift of beautifying creation, by shedding over it the charm of melancholy. "Pleasant but mournful to the soul is the memory of joys that are past"—is the text we should choose were we about to preach on his genius. No vain repinings, no idle regrets, does his spirit now breathe over the still receding Past. But time-sanctified are all the shows that arise before his pensive imagination; and the common light of day, once gone, in his poetry seems to shine as if it had all been dying sunset or moonlight, or the newborn dawn. His human sensibilities are so fine as to be in themselves poetical; and his poetical aspirations so delicate as to be felt always human. Hence his Sonnets have been dear to poets—having in them "more than meets the ear"—spiritual breathings that hang around the words like light around fair flowers; and hence, too, have they been beloved by all

natural hearts who, having not the "faculty divine," have yet the "vision"—that is, the power of seeing and of hearing the sights and the sounds which genius alone can awaken, bringing them from afar out of the dust and dimness of evanishment.

Mr. Bowles has been a poet for good fifty years; and if his genius do not burn quite so bright as it did some lustres bygone—yet we do not say there is any abatement even of its brightness: it shines with a mellow and also with a more cheerful light. Long ago, he was perhaps rather too pensive—too melancholy—too pathetic—too wo-begone—in too great bereavement. Like the nightingale, he sung with a thorn at his breast—from which one wondered the point had not been broken off by perpetual pressure. Yet, though rather monotonous, his strains were most musical as well as melancholy; feeling was often relieved by fancy; and one dreamed, in listening to his elegies, and hymns, and sonnets, of moonlit rivers flowing through hoary woods, and of the yellow sands of dim-imaged seas murmuring round "the shores of old Romance." A fine enthusiasm too was his—in those youthful years—inspired by the poetry of Greece and Rome; and in some of his happiest inspirations there was a delightful and original union—to be found nowhere else that we can remember—of the spirit of that ancient song—the pure classical spirit that murmured by the banks of the Eurotas and Ilissus with that of our own poetry, that like a noble Naiad dwells in the "clear well of English undefiled." In almost all his strains you felt the scholar; but his was no affected or pedantic scholarship—intrusive most when least required; but the growth of a consummate classical education, of which the career was not inglorious among the towers of Oxford. Bowles was a pupil of the Wartons—Joe and Tom—God bless their souls!—and his name may be joined, not unworthily, with theirs—and with Mason's, and Gray's, and Collins's—academics all; the works of them all showing a delicate and exquisite colouring of classical art, enriching their own English nature. Bowles's muse is always loath to forget—wherever she roam or linger—Winchester and Oxford—the Itchin and the Isis. None educated in those delightful and divine haunts will ever forget them, who can read Homer and Pindar, and Sophocles, and Theocritus, and Bion, and Moschus, in the original; Rhedicyna's ungrateful or renegade sons are those alone who pursued their poetical studies—in translations. They never knew the nature of the true old Greek fire.

But has Bowles written a Great Poem? If he has, publish it, and we shall make him a Bishop.

What shall we say of the Pleasures of Hope? That the harp from which that music breathed, was an Æolian harp placed in the window of a high hall, to catch airs from heaven when heaven was glad, as well she might be with such moon and such stars, and streamering half the region with a magnificent aurora borealis. Now the music deepens into a majestic march—now it swells into a holy

hymn—and now it dies away elegiac-like, as if mourning over a tomb. Vague, indefinite, uncertain, dream-like, and visionary all; but never else than beautiful; and ever and anon, we know not why, sublime. It ceases in the hush of night—and we awaken as if from a dream. Is it not even so?—In his youth Campbell lived where "distant isles could hear the loud Corbrechtan roar;" and sometimes his poetry is like that whirlpool—the sound as of the wheels of many chariots. Yes, happy was it for him that he had liberty to roam along the many-based, hollow-rumbling western coast of that unaccountable county Argyllshire. The sea-roar cultivated his naturally fine musical ear, and it sank too into his heart. Hence is his prime Poem bright with hope as is the sunny sea when sailor's sweet-hearts on the shore are looking out for ships; and from a foreign station down comes the fleet before the wind, and the very shells beneath their footsteps seem to sing for joy. As for Gertrude of Wyoming, we love her as if she were our own only daughter—filling our life with bliss, and then leaving it desolate. Even now we see her ghost gliding through those giant woods! As for Lochiel's Warning, there was heard the voice of the Last of the Seers. The Second Sight is now extinguished in the Highland glooms—the Lament waits no more,

"That man may not hide what God would reveal!"

The Navy owes much to "Ye mariners of England." Sheer hulks often seemed ships till that strain arose—but ever since in our imagination have they brightened the roaring ocean. And dare we say, after that, that Campbell has never written a Great Poem? Yes—in the face even of the Metropolitan!

It was said many long years ago in the Edinburgh Review, that none but maudlin milliners and sentimental ensigns supposed that James Montgomery was a poet. Then is Maga a maudlin milliner—and Christopher North a sentimental ensign. We once called Montgomery a Moravian; and though he assures us that we were mistaken, yet having made an assertion, we always stick to it, and therefore he must remain a Moravian, if not in his own belief, yet in ours. Of all religious sects, the Moravians are the most simple-minded, pure-hearted, and high-souled—and these qualities shine serenely in the Pelican Island. In earnestness and fervour, that poem is by few or none excelled; it is embalmed in sincerity, and therefore shall fade not away; neither shall it moulder—not even although exposed to the air, and blow the air ever so rudely through time's mutations. Not that it is a mummy. Say rather a fair form laid asleep in immortality—its face wearing, day and night, summer and winter, look at it when you will, a saintly—a celestial smile. That is a true image; but is the Pelican Island a Great Poem? We pause not for a reply.

Lyrical Poetry, we opine, hath many branches—and one of them "beautiful exceedingly" with bud, blossom, and fruit of balm and brightness, round which is ever heard the murmur of bees and of birds, hangs trailing along the mossy greensward when the air is calm,

and ever and anon, when blow the fitful breezes, it is uplifted in the sunshine, and glows wav-ingly aloft, as if it belonged even to the loftiest region of the Tree which is Amaranth. That is a fanciful, perhaps foolish form of expres-sion, employed at present to signify Song-writ-ing. Now, of all the song-writers that ever warbled, or chanted, or sung, the best, in our estimation, is verily none other than Thomas Moore. True that Robert Burns has indited many songs that slip into the heart, just like light, no one knows how, filling its chambers sweetly and silently, and leaving it nothing more to desire for perfect contentment. Or let us say, sometimes when he sings, it is like listening to a linnet in the broom, a blackbird in the brake, a laverock in the sky. They sing in the fulness of their joy, as nature teaches them—and so did he; and the man, woman, or child, who is delighted not with such singing, be their virtues what they may, must never hope to be in Heaven. Gracious Providence placed Burns in the midst of the sources of Lyrical Poetry—when he was born a Scottish peasant. Now, Moore is an Irishman, and was born in Dublin. Moore is a Greek scholar, and translated—after a fashion—Anacreon. And Moore has lived much in towns and cities—and in that society which will suffer none else to be called good. Some advantages he has enjoyed which Burns never did—but then how many disadvantages has he undergone, from which the Ayrshire Ploughman, in the bondage of his poverty, was free! You see all that at a single glance into their poetry. But all in humble life is not high—all in high life is not low; and there is as much to guard against in hovel as in hall—in “auld clay-biggings” as in marble palace. Burns some-times wrote like a mere boor—Moore has too often written like a mere man of fashion. But take them both at their best—and both are im-itable. Both are national poets—and who shall say, that if Moore had been born and bred a peasant, as Burns was, and if Ireland had been such a land of knowledge, and virtue, and religion as Scotland is—and surely, with-out offence, we may say that it never was, and never will be—though we love the Green Island well—that with his fine fancy, warm heart, and exquisite sensibilities, he might not have been as natural a lyrist as Burns; while, take him as he is, who can deny that in rich-ness, in variety, in grace, and in the power of art, he is superior to the ploughman. Of Lal-lah Rookh and the Loves of the Angels, we defy you to read a page without admiration; but the question recurs, and it is easily an-swered, we need not say in the negative, did Moore ever write a Great Poem?

Let us make a tour of the Lakes. Rydal Mount! Wordsworth! The Bard! Here is the man who has devoted his whole life to poetry. It is his profession. He is a poet just as his brother is a clergyman. He is the Head of the Lake School, just as his brother is Master of Trinity. Nothing in this life and in this world has he had to do, beneath sun, moon, and stars, but

“To murmur by the living brooks
A music sweeter than their own.”

What has been the result? Seven volumes (oh! why not seven more?) of poetry, as beautiful as ever charmed the ears of Pan and of Apollo. The earth—the middle air—the sky—the heaven—the heart, mind, and soul of man—are “the haunt and main region of his song.” In describing external nature as she is, no poet perhaps has excelled Wordsworth—not even Thomson; in imbuing her and mak-ing her pregnant with spiritualities, till the mighty mother teems with “beauty far more beauteous” than she had ever rejoiced in till such communion—he excels all the brother-hood. Therein lies his special glory, and therein the immortal evidences of the might of his creative imagination. All men at times “muse on nature with a poet’s eye,”—but Wordsworth ever—and his soul has grown more and more religious from such worship. Every rock is an altar—every grove a shrine. We fear that there will be sectarians even in this Natural Religion till the end of time. But he is the High Priest of Nature—or, to use his own words, or nearly so, he is the High Priest “in the metropolitan temple built in the heart of mighty poets.” But has he—even he—ever written a Great Poem? If he has—it is not the Excursion. Nay, the Excursion is not a Poem. It is a Series of Poems, all swimming in the light of poetry; some of them sweet and simple, some elegant and graceful, some beautiful and most lovely, some of “strength and state,” some majestic, some magnificent, some sublime. But though it has an opening, it has no beginning; you can discover the middle only by the numerals on the page; and the most serious apprehensions have been very generally entertained that it has no end. While Pedlar, Poet, and Solitary breathe the vital air, may the Excursion, stop where it will, be renewed; and as in its present shape it comprehends but a Three Days’ Walk, we have but to think of an Excursion of three weeks, three months, or three years, to have some idea of Eternity. Then the life of man is not always limited to the term of threescore and ten years. What a Journal might it prove at last! Poetry in profusion till the land overflowed; but whether in one volume, as now, or in fifty, in future, not a Great Poem—nay, not a Poem at all—nor ever to be so esteemed, till the principles on which Great Poets build the lofty rhyme are exploded, and the very names of Art and Science smothered and lost in the bosom of Nature from which they arose.

Let the dullest clod that ever vegetated, provided only he be alive and hear, be shut up in a room with Coleridge, or in a wood, and sub-jected for a few minutes to the ethereal influ-ence of that wonderful man’s monologue, and he will begin to believe himself a Poet. The barren wilderness may not blossom like the rose, but it will seem, or rather feel to do so, un-der the lustre of an imagination exhaustless as the sun. You may have seen perhaps rocks suddenly so glorified by sunlight with colours manifold, that the bees seek them, deluded by the show of flowers. The sun, you know, does not always show his orb even in the daytime—and people are often ignorant of his place in

the firmament. But he keeps shining away at his leisure, as you would know were he to suffer eclipse. Perhaps he—the sun—is at no other time a more delightful luminary than when he is pleased to dispense his influence through a general haze, or mist—softening all the day till meridian is almost like the afternoon, and the grove, anticipating gloaming, bursts into “dance and minstrelsy” ere the god go down into the sea. Clouds too become him well—whether thin and fleecy and braided, or piled up all round about him castle-wise and cathedral-fashion, to say nothing of temples and other metropolitan structures; nor is it reasonable to find fault with him, when, as naked as the hour he was born, “he flames on the forehead of the morning sky.” The grandeur too of his appearance on setting, has become quite proverbial. Now in all this he resembles Coleridge. It is easy to talk—not very difficult to speechify—hard to speak; but to “discourse” is a gift rarely bestowed by Heaven on mortal man. Coleridge has it in perfection. While he is discoursing, the world loses all its commonplaces, and you and your wife imagine yourself Adam and Eve listening to the affable archangel Raphael in the Garden of Eden. You would no more dream of wishing him to be mute for a while, than you would a river that “imposes silence with a stilly sound.” Whether you understand two consecutive sentences, we shall not stop too curiously to inquire; but you do something better, you feel the whole just like any other divine music. And ’tis your own fault if you do not “A wiser and a better man arise to-morrow’s morn.”

Reason is said to be one faculty, and Imagination another—but there cannot be a grosser mistake; they are one and indivisible; only in most cases they live like cat and dog, in mutual worrying, or haply sue for a divorce; whereas in the case of Coleridge they are one spirit as well as one flesh, and keep billing and cooing in a perpetual honey-moon. Then his mind is learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, as well as the Greeks and Romans; and though we have heard simpletons say that he knows nothing of science, we have heard him on chemistry puzzle Sir Humphrey Davy—and prove to his own entire satisfaction, that Leibnitz and Newton, though good men, were but indifferent astronomers. Besides, he thinks nothing of inventing a new science, with a complete nomenclature, in a twinkling—and should you seem sluggish of apprehension, he endows you with an additional sense or two, over and above the usual seven, till you are no longer at a loss, be it even to scent the music of fragrance, or to hear the smell of a balmy piece of poetry. All the faculties, both of soul and sense, seem amicably to interchange their functions and their provinces; and you fear not that the dream may dissolve, persuaded that you are in a future state of permanent enjoyment. Nor are we now using any exaggeration; for if you will but think how unutterably dull are all the ordinary sayings and doings of this life, spent as it is with ordinary people, you may imagine how in sweet delirium you may be robbed of yourself by a seraphic tongue that has fed since first it lisped

on “honey-dew,” and by lips that have “breathed the air of Paradise,” and learned a seraphic language, which, all the while that it is English, is as grand as Greek and as soft as Italian. We only know this, that Coleridge is the alchymist that in his crucible melts down hours to moments—and lo! diamonds sprinkled on a plate of gold.

What a world would this be were all its inhabitants to fiddle like Paganini, ride like Ducrow, discourse like Coleridge, and do every thing else in a style of equal perfection! But pray, how does a man write poetry with a pen upon paper, who thus is perpetually pouring it from his inspired lips? Read the Ancient Mariner, the Nightingale, and Genevieve. In the first, you shudder at the superstition of the sea—in the second, you thrill with the melodies of the woods—in the third, earth is like heaven;—for you are made to feel that

“All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.”

Has Coleridge, then, ever written a Great Poem? No; for besides the Regions of the Fair, the Wild, and the Wonderful, there is another up to which his wing might not soar; though the plumes are strong as soft. But why should he who loveth to take “the wings of a dove that he may flee away” to the bosom of beauty, though there never for a moment to be at rest—why should he, like an eagle, soar into the storms that roll above this visible diurnal sphere in peals of perpetual thunder?

Wordsworth, somewhere or other, remonstrates, rather angrily, with the Public, against her obstinate ignorance shown in persisting to put into one class, himself, Coleridge, and Southey, as birds of a feather, that not only flock together but warble the same sort of song. But he elsewhere tells us that he and Coleridge hold the same principles in the Art Poetical; and among his Lyrical Ballads he admitted the three finest compositions of his illustrious Compeer. The Public, therefore, is not to blame in taking him at his word, even if she had discerned no family likeness in their genius. Southey certainly resembles Wordsworth less than Coleridge does; but he lives at Keswick, which is but some dozen miles from Rydal, and perhaps with an unphilosophical though pensive Public that link of connection should be allowed to be sufficient, even were there no other less patent and material than the Macadamized turnpike road. But true it is and of verity, that Southey, among our living Poets, stands aloof and “alone in his glory;” for he alone of them all has adventured to illustrate, in Poems of magnitude, the different characters, customs, and manners of nations. Joan of Arc is an English and French story—Thalaba, Arabian—Kehama, Indian—Madoc, Welsh and American—and Roderick, Spanish and Moorish; nor would it be easy to say (setting aside the first, which was a very youthful work) in which of these noble Poems Mr. Southey has most successfully performed an achievement entirely beyond the power of any but the highest genius. In Ma-

doc, and especially in Roderick, he has relied on the truth of nature—as it is seen in the history of great national transactions and events. In Thalaba and in Kehama, though in them, too, he has brought to bear an almost boundless lore, he follows the leading of Fancy and Imagination, and walks in a world of wonders. Seldom, if ever, has one and the same Poet exhibited such power in such different kinds of Poetry—in Truth a Master, and in Fiction a Magician.

It is easy to assert that he draws on his vast stores of knowledge gathered from books—and that we have but to look at the multifarious accumulation of notes appended to his great Poems to see that they are not Inventions. The materials of poetry indeed are there—often the raw materials—seldom more; but the Imagination that moulded them into beautiful, or magnificent, or wondrous shapes, is all his own—and has shown itself most creative. Southey never was among the Arabians nor Hindoos, and therefore had to trust to travellers. But had he not been a Poet he might have read till he was blind, nor ever seen

“The palm-grove inland amid the waste,”

where with Oneiza in her Father’s Tent

“How happily the years of Thalaba went by!”

In what guidance but that of his own genius did he descend with the Destroyer into the Dom-daniel Caves? And who showed him the Swerga’s Bowers of Bliss? Who built for him with all its palaces that submarine City of the Dead, safe in its far-down silence from the superficial thunder of the sea? The greatness as well as the originality of Southey’s genius is seen in the conception of every one of his Five Chief Works—with the exception of Joan of Arc, which was written in very early youth, and is chiefly distinguished by a fine enthusiasm. They are one and all National Poems—wonderfully true to the customs and characters of the inhabitants of the countries in which are laid the scenes of all their various adventures and enterprises—and the Poet has entirely succeeded in investing with an individual interest each representative of a race. Thalaba is a true Arab—Madoc a true Briton—King Roderick indeed the Last of the Goths. Kehama is a personage whom we can be made to imagine only in Hindostan. Sir Walter confined himself in his poetry to Scotland—except in Rokeby—and his might then went not with him across the Border; though in his novels and romances he was at home when abroad—and nowhere else more gloriously than with Saladin in the Desert. Lalla Rookh is full of brilliant poetry; and one of the series—the Fire Worshippers—is Moore’s highest effort; but the whole is too elaborately Oriental—and often in pure weariness of all that accumulation of the gorgeous imagery of the East, we shut up the false glitter, and thank Heaven that we are in one of the bleakest and barest corners of the West. But Southey’s magic is more potent—and he was privileged to exclaim—

“Come, listen to a tale of times of old!

Come, for ye know me. I am he who framed
Of Thalaba the wild and wondrous song.

Come listen to my lay, and ye shall hear
How Madoc from the shores of Britain spread
The adventurous sail, explored the ocean path,
And quell’d barbaric power, and overthrew
The bloody altars of idolatry,
And planted on its fanes triumphantly
The Cross of Christ. Come, listen to my lay.”

Of all his chief Poems the conception and the execution are original; in much faulty and imperfect both; but bearing throughout the impress of original power; and breathing a moral charm, in the midst of the wildest and sometimes even extravagant imaginings, that shall preserve them for ever from oblivion, embalming them in the spirit of delight and of love. Fairy Tales—or tales of witchcraft and enchantment, seldom stir the holiest and deepest feelings of the heart; but Thalaba and Kehama do so; “the still sad music of humanity” is ever with us among all most wonderful and wild; and of all the spells, and charms, and talismans that are seen working strange effects before our eyes, the strongest are ever felt to be Piety and Virtue. What exquisite pictures of domestic affection and bliss! what sanctity and devotion! Meek as a child is Innocence in Southey’s poetry, but mightier than any giant. Whether matron or maid, mother or daughter—in joy or sorrow—as they appear before us, doing or suffering, “beautiful and dutiful,” with Faith, Hope and Charity their guardian angels, nor Fear ever once crossing their path! We feel, in perusing such pictures—“Purity! thy name is woman!” and are not these Great Poems? We are silent. But should you answer “yes,” from us in our present mood you shall receive no contradiction.

The transition always seems to us, we scarcely know why, as natural as delightful from Southey to Scott. They alone of all the poets of the day have produced poems in which are pictured and narrated, epically, national characters, and events, and actions, and catastrophes. Southey has heroically invaded foreign countries; Scott as heroically brought his power to bear on his own people; and both have achieved immortal triumphs. But Scotland is proud of her great national minstrel—and as long as she is Scotland, will wash and warm the laurels round his brow, with rains and winds that will for ever keep brightening their glossy verdure. Whereas England, ungrateful ever to her men of genius, already often forgets the poetry of Southey; while Little Britain abuses his patriotism in his politics. The truth is, that Scotland had forgotten her own history till Sir Walter burnished it all up till it glowed again—it is hard to say whether in his poetry or in his prose the brightest—and the past became the present. We know now the character of our own people as it showed itself in war and peace—in palace, castle, hall, hut, hovel, and shieling—through centuries of advancing civilization, from the time when Edinburgh was first cyleped Auld Reekie, down to the period when the bright idea first occurred to her inhabitants to call her the Modern Athens. This he has effected by means of about one hundred volumes, each exhibiting to the life about fifty characters, and each character not only an individual in himself or herself, but the representative—so we

offer to prove if you be skeptical—of a distinct class or order of human beings, from the Monarch to the Mendicant, from the Queen to the Gipsy, from the Bruce to the Monipies, from Mary Stuart to Jenny Dennisoun. We shall never say that Scott is Shakspeare; but we shall say that he has conceived and created—you know the meaning of these words—as many characters—real living flesh-and-blood human beings—naturally, truly, and consistently, as Shakspeare; who, always transcendently great in pictures of the passions—out of their range, which surely does not comprehend all rational being—was—nay, do not threaten to murder us—not seldom an imperfect delineator of human life. All the world believed that Sir Walter had not only exhausted his own genius in his poetry, but that he had exhausted all the matter of Scottish life—he and Burns together—and that no more ground unturmed-up lay on this side of the Tweed. Perhaps he thought so too for a while—and shared in the general and natural delusion. But one morning before breakfast it occurred to him, that in all his poetry he had done little or nothing—though more for Scotland than any other of her poets—except the Ploughman—and that it would not be much amiss to commence a New Century of Inventions. Hence the Prose Tales—Novels—and Romances—fresh floods of light pouring all over Scotland—and occasionally illuminating England, France, and Germany, and even Palestine—whatever land had been ennobled by Scottish enterprise, genius, valour, and virtue.

Up to the era of Sir Walter, living people had some vague, general, indistinct notions about dead people mouldering away to nothing centuries ago, in regular kirkyards and chance burial-places, “mang muirs and mosses many O,” somewhere or other in that difficultly-distinguished and very debatable district called the Borders. All at once he touched their tombs with a divining rod, and the turf streamed out ghosts, some in woodmen’s dresses—most in warrior’s mail: green arches leaped forth with yew-bows and quivers—and giants stalked shaking spears. The gray chronicler smiled; and, taking up his pen, wrote, in lines of light the annals of the chivalrous and heroic days of auld feudal Scotland. The nation then, for the first time, knew the character of its ancestors; for those were not spectres—not they indeed—nor phantoms of the brain—but gaunt flesh and blood, or glad and glorious;—base-born cottage churls of the olden time, because Scottish, became familiar to the love of the nation’s heart, and so to its pride did the high-born lineage of palace-kings. The worst of Sir Walter is, that he has *harried* all Scotland. Never was there such a freebooter. He hurries all men’s cattle—kills themselves off hand, and makes bonfires of their castles. Thus has he disturbed and illuminated all the land as with the blazes of a million beacons. Lakes lie with their islands distinct by midnight as by mid-day; wide woods glow gloriously in the gloom; and by the stormy splendour you even see ships, with all sails set, far at sea. His favourite themes in prose or numerous verse, are still “Knights and Lords and mighty Earls,”

and their Lady-loves, chiefly Scottish—of kings that fought for fame or freedom—of fatal Floods and bright Bannockburn—of the DELIVERER. If that be not national to the teeth, Homer was no Ionian, Tyrtæus not sprung from Sparta, and Christopher North a Cockney. Let Abbotsford, then, be cognomed by those that choose it, the Ariosto of the North—we shall continue to call him plain Sir Walter.

Now, we beg leave to decline answering our own question—has he ever written a Great Poem? We do not care one straw whether he has or not; for he has done this—he has exhibited human life in a greater variety of forms and lights, all definite and distinct, than any other man whose name has reached our ears; and therefore, without fear or trembling, we tell the world to its face, that he is, out of all sight, the greatest genius of the age, not forgetting Goethe, the Devil, and Dr. Faustus.

“What? Scott a greater genius than Byron!”

Yes—beyond compare. Byron had a vivid and strong, but not a wide, imagination. He saw things as they are, occasionally standing prominently and boldly out from the flat surface of this world; and in general, when his soul was up, he described them with a master’s might. We speak now of the external world—of nature and of art. Now observe how he dealt with nature. In his early poems he betrayed no passionate love of nature, though we do not doubt that he felt it; and even in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* he was an unfrequent and no very devout worshipper at her shrine. We are not blaming his lukewarmness; but simply stating a fact. He had something else to think of, it would appear; and proved himself a poet. But in the third canto, “a change came over the spirit of his dream,” and he “babbled o’ green fields,” floods, and mountains. Unfortunately, however, for his originality, that canto is almost a cento—his model being Wordsworth. His merit, whatever it may be, is limited therefore to that of imitation. And observe, the imitation is not merely occasional or verbal; but all the descriptions are conceived in the spirit of Wordsworth, coloured by it and shaped—from it they live, and breathe, and have their being; and that so entirely, that had the *Excursion* and *Lyrical Ballads* never been, neither had any composition at all resembling, either in conception or execution, the third canto of *Childe Harold*. His soul, however, having been awakened by the inspiration of the Bard of Nature, never afterwards fell asleep, nor got drowsy over her beauties or glories; and much fine description pervades most of his subsequent works. He afterwards made much of what he saw his own—and even described it after his own fashion; but a greater in that domain was his instructor and guide—nor in his noblest efforts did he ever make any close approach to those inspired passages, which he had manifestly set as models before his imagination. With all the fair and great objects in the world of art, again, Byron dealt like a poet of original genius. They themselves, and not descriptions of them, kindled it up; and thus “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,” do almost entirely compose the fourth canto

which is worth, ten times over, all the rest. The impetuosity of his career is astonishing; never for a moment does his wing flag; ever and anon he stoops but to soar again with a more majestic sweep; and you see how he glories in his flight—that he is proud as Lucifer. The first two cantos are frequently cold, cumbersome, stiff, heavy, and dull; and, with the exception of perhaps a dozen stanzas, and these far from being of first-rate excellence, they are found wofully wanting in the true fire. Many passages are but the baldest prose. Byron, after all, was right in thinking—at first—but poorly of these cantos; and so was the friend, not Mr. Hobhouse, who threw cold water upon them in manuscript. True, they “made a prodigious sensation,” but bitter-bad stuff has often done that; while often unheeded or unheard has been an angel’s voice. Had they been suffered to stand alone, long ere now had they been pretty well forgotten; and had they been followed by other two cantos no better than themselves, then had the whole four in good time been most certainly damned. But, fortunately, the poet, in his pride, felt himself pledged to proceed; and proceed he did in a superior style; borrowing, stealing, and robbing, with a face of aristocratic assurance that must have amazed the plundered; but intermingling with the spoil riches fairly won by his own genius from the exhaustless treasury of nature, who loved her wayward, her wicked, and her wondrous son. Is *Childe Harold*, then, a Great Poem? What! with one half of it little above mediocrity, one quarter of it not original in conception, and in execution swarming with faults, and the remainder glorious? As for his tales—the *Giaour*, *Corsair*, *Lara*, *Bride of Abydos*, *Siege of Corinth*, and so forth—they are all spirited, energetic, and passionate performances—sometimes nobly and sometimes meanly versified—but displaying neither originality nor fertility of invention, and assuredly no wide range either of feeling or of thought, though over that range a supreme dominion. Some of his dramas are magnificent—and in many of his smaller poems, pathos and beauty overflow. *Don Juan* exhibits almost every kind of talent; and in it the degradation of poetry is perfect.

But there is another glory belonging to this age, and almost to this age alone of our poetry—the glory of Female Genius. We have heard and seen it seriously argued whether or not women are equal to men; as if there could be a moment’s doubt in any mind unbesotted by sex, that they are infinitely superior; not in understanding, thank Heaven, nor in intellect, out in all other “impulses of soul and sense” that dignify and adorn human beings, and make them worthy of living on this delightful earth. Men for the most part are such worthless wretches, that we wonder how women condescended to allow the world to be carried on; and we attribute that phenomenon solely to the hallowed yearnings of maternal affection, which breathes as strongly in maid as in matron, and may be beautifully seen in the child fondling its doll in its blissful bosom. Philoprogenitiveness! But not to pursue that interesting speculation, suffice it for the pre-

sent to say, that so far from having no souls—a whim of Mahomet’s, who thought but of their bodies—women are the sole spiritual beings that walk the earth not unseen; they alone, without pursuing a complicated and scientific system of deception and hypocrisy, are privileged from on high to write poetry. We—men we mean—may affect a virtue, though we have it not, and appear to be inspired by the divine afflatus. Nay, we sometimes—often—are truly so inspired, and write like Gods. A few of us are subject to fits, and in them utter oracles. But the truth is too glaring to be denied, that all male rational creatures are in the long run vile, corrupt, and polluted; and that the best man that ever died in his bed within the arms of his distracted wife, is wicked far than the worst woman that was ever iniquitously hanged for murdering what was called her poor husband, who in all cases righteously deserved his fate. Purity of mind is incompatible with manhood; and a monk is a monster—so is every Fellow of a College, and every Roman Catholic Priest, from Father O’Leary to Dr. Doyle. Confessions, indeed! Why, had Joseph himself confessed all he ever felt and thought to Potiphar’s wife, she would have frowned him from her presence in all the chaste dignity of virtuous indignation, and so far from tearing off his garment, would not have touched it for the whole world. But all women—till men by marriage, or by something, if that be possible, worse even than marriage, try in vain to reduce them nearly to their own level—are pure as dewdrops or moonbeams, and know not the meaning of evil. Their genius conjectures it; and in that there is no sin. But their genius loves best to image forth good, for ’tis the blessing of their life, its power, and its glory; and hence, when they write poetry, it is religious, sweet, soft, solemn, and divine.

Observe, however—to prevent all mistakes—that we speak but of British women—and of British women of the present age. Of the German Fair Sex we know little or nothing; but daresay that the Baroness la Motte Fouqué is a worthy woman, and as vapid as the Baron. Neither make we any allusion to Madame Genlis, or other illustrious Lemans of the French school, who charitably adopted their own natural daughters, while other less pious ladies, who had become mothers without being wives, sent theirs to Foundling Hospitals. We restrict ourselves to the Maids and Matrons of this Island—and of this Age; and as it is of poetical genius that we speak—we name the names of Joanna Baillie, Mary Tighe, Felicia Hemans, Caroline Bowles, Mary Howitt, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and the Lovely Norton; while we pronounce several other sweet-sounding Christian surnames in whispering undertones of affection, almost as inaudible as the sound of the growing of grass on a dewy evening.

Corinna and Sappho must have been women of transcendent genius so to move Greece. For though the Greek character was most impressive and combustible, it was so only to the finest finger and fire. In that delightful land dunces were all dumb. Where genius

alone spoke and sung poetry, how hard to excel! Corinna and Sappho did excel—the one, it is said, conquering Pindar—and the other all the world but Phaon.

But our own Joanna has been visited with a still loftier inspiration. She has created tragedies which Sophocles—or Euripides—nay, even Æschylus himself, might have feared, in competition for the crown. She is our Tragic Queen; but she belongs to all places as to all times; and Sir Walter truly said—let them who dare deny it—that he saw her Genius in a sister shape sailing by the side of the Swan of Avon. Yet Joanna loves to pace the pastoral mead; and then we are made to think of the tender dawn, the clear noon, and the bright meridian of her life, past among the tall cliffs of the silver Calder, and in the lonesome heart of the dark Strathaven Muirs.

Plays on the Passions! "How absurd!" said one philosophical writer. "This will never do. It has done—perfectly. What, pray, is the aim of all tragedy? The Stagyrte has told us—to purify the passions by pity and terror. They ventilate and cleanse the soul—till its atmosphere is like that of a calm, bright summer day. All plays, therefore, must be on the Passions. And all that Joanna intended—and it was a great intention greatly effected—was in her Series of Dramas to steady her purposes by ever keeping one great end in view, of which the perpetual perception could not fail to make all the means harmonious, and therefore majestic. One passion was, therefore, constituted sovereign of the soul in each glorious tragedy—sovereign sometimes by divine right—sometimes an usurper—generally a tyrant. In De Monfort we behold the horrid reign of Hate. But in his sister—the seraphic sway of Love. Darkness and light sometimes opposed in sublime contrast—and sometimes the light swallowing up the darkness—or "smoothing its raven down till it smiles." Finally, all is black as night and the grave—for the light, unextinguished, glides away into some far-off world of peace. Count Basil! A woman only could have imagined that divine drama. How different the love Basil feels for Victoria from Anthony's for Cleopatra! Pure, deep, high as the heaven and the sea. Yet on it we see him borne away to shame, destruction, and death. It is indeed his ruling passion. But up to the day he first saw her face his ruling passion had been the love of glory. And the hour he died by his own hand was troubled into madness by many passions; for are they not all mysteriously linked together, sometimes a dreadful brotherhood?

Do you wonder how one mind can have such vivid consciousness of the feelings of another, while their characters are cast in such different moulds? It is, indeed, wonderful—but the power is that of sympathy and genius. The dramatic poet, whose heart breathes love to all living things, and whose overflowing tenderness diffuses itself over the beauty even of unliving nature, may yet paint with his creative hand the steeled heart of him who sits on a throne of blood—the lust of crime in a mind polluted with wickedness—the remorse of acts which could never pass in thought through his

imagination as his own. For, in the act of imagination, he can suppress in his mind its own peculiar feelings—its good and gracious affections—call up from their hidden places those elements of our being, of which the seeds were sown in him as in all—give them unnatural magnitude and power—conceive the disorder of passions, the perpetration of crimes, the tortures of remorse, or the scorn of that human weakness, from which his own gentle bosom and blameless life are pure and free. He can bring himself, in short, into an imaginary and momentary sympathy with the wicked, just as his mind falls of itself into a natural and true sympathy with those whose character is accordant with his own; and watching the emotions and workings of his mind in the spontaneous and in the forced sympathy, he knows and understands from himself what passes in the minds of others. What is done in the highest degree by the highest genius, is done by all of ourselves in lesser degree, and unconsciously, at every moment, in our intercourse with one another. To this kind of sympathy, so essential to our knowledge of the human mind, and without which there can be neither poetry nor philosophy, are necessary a largeness of heart which willingly yields itself to conceive the feelings and states of others whose character is utterly unlike its own, and freedom from any inordinate overpowering passion which quenches in the mind the feelings of nature it has already known, and places it in habitual enmity to the affections and happiness of its kind. To paint bad passions, is not to praise them: they alone can paint them well who hate, fear, or pity them; and therefore Baillie has done so—nay start not—better than Byron.

Well may our land be proud of such women. None such ever before adorned her poetical annals. Glance over that most interesting volume, "Specimens of British Poetesses," by that amiable, ingenious, and erudite man, the Reverend Alexander Dyce, and what effulgence begins to break towards the close of the eighteenth century! For ages on ages the genius of English women had ever and anon been shining forth in song; but faint though fair was the lustre, and struggling imprisoned in clouds. Some of the sweet singers of those days bring tears to our eyes by their simple pathos—for their poetry breathes of their own sorrows, and shows that they were but too familiar with grief. But their strains are mere melodies "sweetly played in tune." The deeper harmonies of poetry seem to have been beyond their reach. The range of their power was limited. Anne, Countess of Winchelsea—Catherine Phillips, known by the name of Orinda—and Mrs. Anne Killigrew, who, as Dryden says, was made an angel, "in the last promotion to the skies,"—showed, as they sang on earth, that they were all worthy to sing in heaven. But what were their hymns to those that are now warbled around us from many sister spirits, pure in their lives as they, but brighter far in their genius, and more fortunate in its nurture. Poetry from female lips was then half a wonder and half a reproach. But now 'tis no longer rare—not even the highest—

yes, the highest—for Innocence and Purity are of the highest hierarchies; and the thoughts and feelings they inspire, though breathed in words and tones, “gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman,” are yet lofty as the stars, and humble too as the flowers beneath our feet.

We have not forgotten an order of poets, peculiar, we believe, to our own enlightened land—a high order of poets sprung from the lower orders of the people—and not only sprung from them, but bred as well as born in “the huts where poor men lie,” and glorifying their condition by the light of song. Such glory belongs—we believe—exclusively to this country and to this age. Mr. Southey, who in his own high genius and fame is never insensible to the virtues of his fellow-men, however humble and obscure the sphere in which they may move, has sent forth a volume—and a most interesting one—on the uneducated poets; nor shall we presume to gainsay one of his benevolent words. But this we do say, that all the verse-writers of whom he there treats, and all the verse-writers of the same sort of whom he does not treat, that ever existed on the face of the earth, shrink up into a lean and shrivelled bundle of leaves or sticks, compared with these Five—Burns, Hogg, Cunningham, Bloomfield, and Clare. It must be a strong soil—the soil of this Britain—which sends up such products; and we must not complain of the clime beneath which they grow to such height, and bear such fruitage. The spirit of domestic life must be sound—the natural knowledge of good and evil high—the religion true—the laws just—and the government, on the whole, good, methinks, that have all conspired to educate these children of genius, whose souls Nature had framed of the finer clay.

Such men seem to us more clearly and certainly men of genius, than many who, under different circumstances, may have effected higher achievements. For though they enjoyed in their condition ineffable blessings to dilate their spirits, and touch them with all tenderest thoughts, it is not easy to imagine, on the other hand, the deadening or degrading influences to which by that condition they were inevitably exposed, and which keep down the heaven-aspiring flame of genius, or extinguish it wholly, or hold it smouldering under all sorts of rubbish. Only look at the attempts in verse of the common run of clodhoppers. Buy a few ballads from the wall or stall—and you groan to think that you have been born—such is the mess of mire and filth which often, without the slightest intention of offence, those rural, city, or suburban bards of the lower orders prepare for boys, virgins, and matrons, who all devour it greedily, without suspicion. Strange it is that even in that mural minstrelsy, occasionally occurs a phrase or line, and even stanza, sweet and simple, and to nature true; but consider it in the light of poetry read, recited, and sung by the people, and you might well be appalled by the revelation therein made of the tastes, feelings, and thoughts of the lower orders. And yet in the midst of all the popularity of such productions, the best of Burns’ poems, his *Cottar’s Saturday Night*, and most delicate of his songs, are still more popu-

lar, and read by the same classes with a still greater eagerness of delight. Into this mystery we shall not now inquire; but we mention it now merely to show how divine a thing true genius is, which, burning within the bosoms of a few favourite sons of nature, guards them from all such pollution, lifts them up above it all, purifies their whole being, and without consuming their family affections or friendships, or making them unhappy with their lot, and disgusted with all about them, reveals to them all that is fair and bright and beautiful in feeling and in imagination, makes them very poets indeed, and should fortune favour, and chance and accident, gains for them wide over the world, the glory of a poet’s name.

From all such evil influences incident to their condition—and we are now speaking but of the evil—The Five emerged; and first and foremost—Burns. Our dearly beloved Thomas Carlyle is reported to have said at a dinner given to Allan Cunningham in Dumfries, that Burns was not only one of the greatest of poets, but likewise of philosophers. We hope not. What he did may be told in one short sentence. His genius purified and ennobled in his imagination and in his heart the character and condition of the Scottish peasantry—and reflected them, ideally true to nature, in the living waters of Song. That is what he did; but to do that, did not require the highest powers of the poet and the philosopher. Nay, had he marvellously possessed them, he never would have written a single line of the poetry of the late Robert Burns. Thank Heaven for not having made him such a man—but merely the Ayrshire Ploughman. He was called into existence for a certain work, for the fulness of time was come—but he was neither a Shakespeare, nor a Scott, nor a Goethe; and therefore he rejoiced in writing the *Saturday Night*, and the *Twa Dogs*, and the *Holy Fair*, and *O’ a’ the Airts the Win’ can blaw*, and eke the *Vision*. But forbid it, all ye Gracious Powers! that we should quarrel with Thomas Carlyle—and that, too, for calling Robert Burns one of the greatest poets and philosophers.

Like a strong man rejoicing to run a race, we behold Burns in his golden prime; and glory gleams from the Peasant’s head, far and wide over Scotland. See the shadow tottering to the tomb! frenzied with fears of a prison—for some five pound debt—existing, perhaps, but in his diseased imagination—for, alas! sorely diseased it was, and he too, at last, seemed somewhat insane. He escapes that disgrace in the grave. Buried with his bones be all remembrances of his miseries! But the spirit of song, which was his true spirit, unpolluted and unfallen, lives, and breathes, and has its being, in the peasant-life of Scotland; his songs, which are as household and sheep-fold words, consecrated by the charm that is in all the heart’s purest affections, love and pity, and the joy of grief, shall never decay, till among the people have decayed the virtues which they celebrate, and by which they were inspired; and should some dismal change in the skies ever overshadow the sunshine of our national character, and savage storms end in sullen stillness, which is moral death, in the

poetry of Burns the natives of happier lands will see how noble was once the degenerated race that may then be looking down disconsolately on the dim grass of Scotland with the unlifted eyes of cowards and slaves.

The truth ought always to be spoken; and therefore we say that in fancy James Hogg—in spite of his name and his teeth—was not inferior to Robert Burns—and why not? The Forest is a better school-room for Fancy than ever Burns studied in; it overflowed with poetical traditions. But comparisons are always odious; and the great glory of James is, that he is as unlike Robert as ever one poet was unlike another.

Among hills that once were a forest, and still bear that name, and by the side of a river not unknown in song, lying in his plaid on a brae among the "woolly people," behold that true son of genius—"The Ettrick Shepherd." We are never so happy as when praising James; but pastoral poets are the most incomprehensible of God's creatures; and here is one of the best of them all, who confesses the Chaldee and denies the Noctes!

The Queen's Wake is a garland of fair forest flowers, bound with a band of rushes from the moor. It is not a poem—not it—nor was it intended to be so; you might as well call a bright bouquet of flowers a flower, which, by the by, we do in Scotland. Some of the ballads are very beautiful; one or two even splendid; most of them spirited; and the worst far better than the best that ever was written by any bard in danger of being a blockhead. "Kilmeny" alone places our (ay, *our*) Shepherd among the Undying Ones. London soon loses all memory of lions, let them visit her in the shape of any animal they please. But the Heart of the Forest never forgets. It knows no such word as absence. The Death of a Poet there, is but the beginning of a Life of Fame. His songs no more perish than do flowers. There are no *Annals* in the Forest. All are perennial; or if they do indeed die, their fadings away are invisible in the constant succession—the sweet unbroken series of everlasting bloom. So will it be in his native haunts with the many songs of the Ettrick Shepherd. The lochs may be drained—corn may grow where once the Yarrow flowed—nor is such change much more unlikely than in the olden time would have been thought the extirpation of all the vast oak-woods, where the deer trembled to fall into the den of the wolf, and the wild boar barrowed beneath the eagle's eyrie. All extinct now! But obsolete never shall be the Shepherd's plaintive or pawky, his melancholy or merry, lays. The ghost of "Mary Lee" will be seen in the moonlight coming down the hills; the "Witch of Fife" on the clouds will still bestride her besom; and the "Gude Grey Cat" will mew in imagination, were even the last mouse on his last legs, and the feline species swept off by war, pestilence, and famine, and heard to pur no more!

It is here where Burns was weakest, that the Shepherd is strongest—the world of shadows. The airy beings that to the impassioned soul of Burns seemed cold, bloodless, unattractive,

rise up lovely in their own silent domains, before the dreaming fancy of the tender-hearted Shepherd. The still green beauty of the pastoral hills and vales where he passed all his days, inspired him with ever-brooding visions of Fairy Land, till, as he lay musing on the brae, the world of shadows seemed, in the clear depths, a softened reflection of real life, like the hills and heavens in the water of his native lake. When he speaks of Fairy Land, his language becomes aerial as the very voice of the fairy people, serenest images rise up with the music of the verse, and we almost believe in the being of those unlocalized realms of peace, and of which he sings like a native minstrel.

Yes, James—thou wert but a poor shepherd to the last—poor in this world's goods—though Altrive Lake is a pretty little bit farmie—given thee by the best of Dukes—with its few laigh sheep-braes—its somewhat stony hayfield or two—its pasture where Crummie might unhungred graze—nyeuck for the potato's bloomy or ploomy shaws—and path-divided from the porch—the garden, among whose flowers "wee Jamie" played. But nature had given thee, to console thy heart in all disappointments from the "false smiling of fortune beguiling," a boon which thou didst hug to thy heart with transport on the darkest day—the "gift o' genie," and the power of immortal song.

And has Scotland to the Ettrick Shepherd been just—been generous—as she was—or was not—to the Ayrshire peasant?—has she, in her conduct to him, shown her contrition for her sin—whatever that may have been—to Burns? It is hard to tell. Fashion tosses the feathered head—and gentility turns away her painted cheek from the Mountain Bard; but when, at the shrine of true poetry, did ever such votaries devoutly worship? Cold, false, and hollow, ever has been their admiration of genius—and different, indeed, from their evanescent ejaculations, has ever been the enduring voice of fame. Scorn be to the scornors! But Scott, and Wordsworth, and Southey and Byron, and the other great bards, have all loved the Shepherd's lays—and Joanna the palm-crowned, and Felicia the muse's darling, and Caroline the Christian poetess, and all the other fair female spirits of song. And in his native land, all hearts that love her streams, and her hills, and her cottages, and her kirks, the bee-humming garden and the primrose-circled fold, the white hawthorn and the green fairy-knowe, all delight in Kilmeny and Mary Lee, and in many another vision that visited the Shepherd in the Forest.

And what can surpass many of the Shepherd's songs? The most undefinable of all undefinable kinds of poetical inspiration are surely—Songs. They seem to start up indeed from the dew-sprinkled soil of a poet's soul, like flowers; the first stanza being root, the second leaf, the third bud, and all the rest blossom, till the song is like a stalk laden with its own beauty, and laying itself down in languid delight on the soft bed of moss—song and flower alike having the same "dying fall!"

A fragment! And the more piteous because a fragment. Go in search of the pathetic, and you will find it tear-steeped, sigh-breathed, moan-muttered, and groaned in fragments. The poet seems often struck dumb by woe—his heart feels that suffering is at its acme—and that he should break off and away from a sight too sad to be longer looked on—haply too humiliating to be disclosed. So, too, it sometimes is with the beautiful. The soul in its delight seeks to escape from the emotion that oppresses it—is speechless—and the song falls mute. Such is frequently the character—and the origin of that character—of our auld Scottish Sangs. In their mournfulness are they not almost like the wail of some bird distracted on the bush from which its nest has been harried, and then suddenly flying away for ever into the woods? In their joyfulness, are they not almost like the hymn of some bird, that love-stricken suddenly darts from the tree-top down to the caresses that flutter through the spring? And such, too, are often the airs to which those dear auld sangs are sung. From excess of feeling—fragmentary; or of one divine part to which genius may be defied to conceive another, because but one hour in all time could have given it birth.

You may call this pure nonsense—but 'tis so pure that you need not fear to swallow it. All great song-writers, nevertheless, have been great thieves. Those who had the blessed fate to flourish first—to be born when “this auld cloak was new,”—the cloak we mean which nature wears—scrupled not to creep upon her as she lay asleep beneath the shadow of some single tree among

“The grace of forest-woods decay’d,
And pastoral melancholy,”

and to steal the very pearls out of her hair—out of the silken snood which enamoured Pan himself had not untied in the Golden Age. Or if she ventured, as sometimes she did, to walk along the highways of the earth, they robbed her in the face of day of her dew-wrought reticule—without hurting, however, the hand from which they brushed that net of gossamer.

Then came the Silver Age of Song, the age in which we now live—and the song-singers were thieves still—stealing and robbing from them who had stolen and robbed of old; yet, how account you for this phenomenon—all parties remain richer than ever—and Nature, especially, after all this thieving and robbery, and piracy and plunder, many million times richer than the day on which she received her dowry,

“The bridal of the earth and sky;”

and with “golden store” sufficient in its scatterings to enable all the sons of genius she will ever bear, to “set up for themselves” in poetry, accumulating capital upon capital, till each is a Cræsus, rejoicing to lend it out without any other interest than cent per cent, paid in sighs, smiles, and tears, and without any other security than the promise of a quiet eye,

“That broods and sleeps on its own heart!”

Amongst the most famous thieves in our time have been Rob, James, and Allan. Burns never

saw or heard a jewel or a tune of a thought or a feeling, but he immediately made it his own—that is, stole it. He was too honest a man to refrain from such thefts. The thoughts and feelings—to whom by divine right did they belong? To Nature. But Burns beheld them “waif and stray,” and in peril of being lost for ever. He seized then on those “snatches of old songs,” wavering away into the same oblivion that lies on the graves of the nameless bards who first gave them being; and now, spiritually interfused with his own lays, they are secured against decay—and like them immortal. So hath the Shepherd stolen many of the Flowers of the Forest—whose beauty had breathed there ever since Flodden’s fatal overthrow; but they had been long fading and pining away in the solitary places, wherein so many of their kindred had utterly disappeared, and beneath the restoring light of his genius their bloom and their balm were for ever renewed. But the thief of all thieves is the Nithsdale and Galloway thief—called by Sir Walter most characteristically, “Honest Allan!” Thief and forger as he is—we often wonder why he is permitted to live. Many is the sweet stanza he has stolen from Time—that silly old carle who kens not even his own—many the lifelike line—and many the strange single word that seems to possess the power of all the parts of speech. And, having stolen them, to what use did he turn the treasures? Why, unable to give back every man his own—for they were all dead, buried, and forgotten—by a potent prayer he evoked from his Pool-Palace, overshadowed by the Dalswinton woods, the Genius of the Nith, to preserve the gathered flowers of song for ever unwithered, for that they all had grown ages ago beneath and around the green shadows of Criffel, and longed now to be embalmed in the purity of the purest river that Scotland sees flowing in unsullied silver to the sea. But the Genius of the Nith—frowning and smiling—as he looked upon his son alternately in anger, love, and pride—refused the votive offering, and told him to be gone; for that he—the Genius—was not a Cromek—and could distinguish with half an eye what belonged to antiquity, from what had undergone, in Allan’s hands, change into “something rich and rare;” and above all, from what had been blown to life that very year by the breath of Allan’s own genius, love-inspired by “his ain lassie,” the “lass that he loe’d best,” springing from seeds itself had sown, and cherished by the dews of the same gracious skies, that filled with motion and music the transparency of the river god’s never-failing urn.

We love Allan’s “Maid of Elvar.” It beats with a fine, free, bold, and healthful spirit. Along with the growth of the mutual love of Eustace and Sybil, he paints peasant-life with a pen that reminds us of the pencil of Wilkie. He is as familiar with it all as Burns; and Burns would have perused with tears many of these pictures, even the most cheerful—for the flood-gates of Robin’s heart often suddenly flung themselves open to a touch, while a rushing gush—wondering gazers knew not why—bedimmed the lustre of his large black eyes. Allan gives us descriptions of Washings and

Watchings o' claes, as Homer has done before him in the *Odyssey*, and that other Allan in the Gentle Shepherd—of Kirks, and Christenings, and Hallowe'ens, and other Festivals. Nor has he feared to string his lyre—why should he?—to such themes as the Cottar's Saturday Night—and the simple ritual of our faith, sung and said

"In some small kirk upon the sunny brae,
That stands all by itself on some sweet Sabbath-day."

Ay, many are the merits of this "Rustic Tale." To appreciate them properly, we must carry along with us, during the perusal of the poem, a right understanding and feeling of that pleasant epithet—Rustic. Rusticity and Urbanity are polar opposites—and there lie between many million modes of Manners, which you know are Minor Morals. But not to puzzle a subject in itself sufficiently simple, the same person may be at once rustic and urbane, and that too, either in his character of man or of poet, or in his twofold capacity of both; for observe that though you may be a man without being a poet, we defy you to be a poet without being a man. A Rustic is a clodhopper; an Urban is a paviour. But it is obvious that the paviour in a field hops the clod; that the clodhopper in a street paces the pavée. At the same time, it is equally obvious that the paviour, in hopping the clod, performs the feat with a sort of city smoke, which breathes of bricks; that the clodhopper, in pacing the pavée, overcomes the difficulty with a kind of country air, that is redolent of broom. Probably, too, Urbanus through a deep fallow is seen ploughing his way in pumps; Rusticus along the shallow stones is heard clattering on clogs. But to cease pursuing the subject through all its variations, suffice it for the present (for we perceive that we must resume the discussion another time) to say, that Allan Cunningham is a living example and lively proof of the truth of our Philosophy—it being universally allowed in the best circles of town and country, that he is an URBANE RUSTIC.

Now, that is the man for our love and money, when the work to be done is a Poem on Scottish Life.

We can say of Allan what Allan says of Eustace:

—"far from the pasture moor
He comes; the fragrance of the dale and wood
Is scenting all his garments, green and good."

The rural imagery is fresh and fair; not copied Cockney-wise, from pictures in oil or water-colours—from mezzotintoes or line-engravings—but from the free open face of day, or the dim retiring face of eve, or the face, "black but comely," of night—by sunlight or moonlight, ever Nature. Sometimes he gives us—Studies. Small, sweet, sunny spots of still or dancing day—stream-gleam—grove-glow—sky-glympse—or cottage-roof, in the deep dell sending up its smoke to the high heavens. But usually Allan paints with a sweeping pencil. He lays down his landscapes, stretching wide and far, and fills them with woods and rivers, hills and mountains, flocks of sheep and herds of cattle; and of all sights in life and nature, none so dear to his

eyes as the golden grain, ebbing like tide of sea before a close long line of glancing sickles—no sound so sweet as, rising up into the pure harvest-air, frost-touched though sunny—beneath the shade of hedge-row-tree, after their mid-day meal, the song of the jolly reapers. But are not his pictures sometimes too crowded? No. For there lies the power of the pen over the pencil. The pencil can do much, the pen every thing; the Painter is imprisoned within a few feet of canvas, the Poet commands the horizon with an eye that circumnavigates the globe; even that glorious pageant, a painted Panorama, is circumscribed by bounds, over which imagination, feeling them all too narrow, is uneasy till she soars; but the Poet's Panorama is commensurate with the soul's desires, and may include the Universe.

This Poem reads as if it had been written during the "dewy hour of prime." Allan must be an early riser. But, if not so now, some forty years ago he was up every morning with the lark,

"Walking to labour by that cheerful song,"

away up the Nith, through the Dalswinton woods; or, for any thing we know to the contrary, intersecting with stone-walls, that wanted not their scientific coping, the green pastures of Sanquhar. Now he is familiar with Chantry's form-full statues; then, with the shapeless cairn on the moor, the rude headstone on the martyr's grave. And thus it is that the present has given him power over the past—that a certain grace and delicacy, inspired by the pursuits of his prime, blend with the creative dreams that are peopled with the lights and shadows of his youth—that the spirit of the old ballad breathes still in its strong simplicity through the composition of his "New Poem"—and that art is seen harmoniously blending there with nature.

We have said already that we delight in the story; for it belongs to an "order of *faibles* gray," which has been ever dear to Poets. Poets have ever loved to bring into the pleasant places and paths of lowly life, persons (we eschew all manner of *personages* and *heroes* and *heroines*, especially with the epithet "our" prefixed) whose native lot lay in a higher sphere: For they felt that by such contrast, natural though rare, a beautiful light was mutually reflected from each condition, and that sacred revelations were thereby made of human character, of which all that is pure and profound appertains equally to all estates of this our mortal being, provided only that happiness knows from whom it comes, and that misery and misfortune are alleviated by religion. Thus Electra appears before us at her father's Tomb, the virgin-wife of the peasant Auturgus, who reverently abstains from the intact body of the daughter of the king. Look into Shakspeare. Rosalind was not so loveable at court as in the woods. Her beauty might have been more brilliant, and her conversation too, among lords and ladies; but more touching both, because true to tenderer nature, when we see and hear her in dialogue with the neat-herdess—ROSALIND and Audrey!

And trickles not the tear down thy cheek, fair reader—burns not the heart within thee, when thou thinkest of Florizel and Perdita on the Farm in the Forest?

Nor from those visions need we fear to turn to Sybil Lesley. We see her in Elvar Tower, a high-born Lady—in Dalgonar Glen, an humble bondmaid. The change might have been the reverse—as with the lassie beloved by the Gentle Shepherd. Both are best. The bust that gloriously set off the burnishing of the rounded silk, not less divinely shrouded its enchantment beneath the swelling russet. Graceful in bower or hall were those arms, and delicate those fingers, when moving white along the rich embroidery, or across the strings of the sculptured harp; nor less so when before the cottage door they woke the homely music of the humming wheel, or when on the brae beside the Pool, they playfully intertwined their softness with the new-washed fleeces, or when among the laughing lasses at the Linn, not loath were they to lay out the coarse linen in the bleaching sunshine, conspicuous She the while among the rustic beauties, as was Nausicaa of old among her nymphs at the Fountain.

We are in love with Sybil Lesley. She is full of *spunk*. That is not a vulgar word; or if it have been so heretofore, henceforth let it cease to be so, and be held synonymous with spirit. She shows it in her defiance of Sir Ralph on the shore of Solway—in her flight from the Tower of Elvar; and the character she displays then and there, prepares us for the part she plays in the peasant's cot in the glen of Dalgonar. We are not surprised to see her take so kindly to the duties of a rustic service; for we call to mind how she sat among the humble good-folks in the hall, when Thrift and Waste figured in that rude but wise Morality, and how the gracious lady showed she sympathized with the cares and contentments of lowly life.

England has singled out John Clare from among her humble sons, (Ebenezer Elliot belongs altogether to another order)—as the most conspicuous for poetical genius, next to Robert Bloomfield. That is a proud distinction—whatever critics may choose to say; and we cordially sympathize with the beautiful expression of his gratitude to the Rural Muse, when he says—

“Like as the little lark from off its nest,
Beside the mossy hill, awakes in glee,
To seek the morning's throne, a merry guest—
So do I seek thy shrine, if that may be,
To win by new attempts another smile from thee.”

Now, England is out of all sight the most beautiful country in the whole world—Scotland alone excepted—and, thank heaven, they two are one kingdom—divided by no line either real or imaginary—united by the Tweed. We forget at this moment—if ever we knew it—the precise number of her counties; but we remember that one and all of them—“alike, but oh! how different”—are fit birth-places and abodes for poets. Some of them we know well, are flat—and we in Scotland, with hills or mountains for ever before our eyes, are sometimes disposed to find fault with them on

that ground—as if nature were not at liberty to find her own level. Flat indeed! So is the sea. Wait till you have walked a few miles in among the Fens—and you will be wafted along like a little sail-boat, up and down undulations green and glad some as waves. Think ye there is no scenery there? Why, you are in the heart of a vast metropolis!—yet have not the sense to see the silent city of mole-hills sleeping in the sun. Call that pond a lake—and by a word how is it transfigured? Now you discern flowers unfolding on its low banks and braes—and the rustle of the rushes is like that of a tiny forest—how appropriate to the wild! Gaze—and to your gaze what colouring grows! Not in green only—or in russet brown doth nature choose to be apparelled in this her solitude—nor ever again will you call her dreary here—for see how every one of those fifty flying showers lightens up its own line of beauty along the plain—instantaneous as dreams—or stationary as waking thought—till, ere you are aware that all was changing, the variety has all melted away into one harmonious glow, attempered by that rainbow.

Let these few words suffice to show that we understand and feel the flattest—dullest—tamest places, as they are most ignorantly called—that have yet been discovered in England. Not in such did John Clare abide—but many such he hath traversed; and his studies have been from childhood upwards among scenes which to ordinary eyes might seem to afford small scope and few materials for contemplation. But his are not ordinary eyes—but gifted; and in every nook and corner of his own county the Northamptonshire Peasant has, during some two score years and more, every spring found without seeking either some lovelier aspect of “the old familiar faces,” or some new faces smiling upon him, as if mutual recognition kindled joy and amity in their hearts.

John Clare often reminds us of James Grahame. They are two of our most artless poets. Their versification is mostly very sweet, though rather flowing forth according to a certain fine natural sense of melody, than constructed on any principles of music. So, too, with their imagery, which seems seldom selected with much care; so that, while it is always true to nature, and often possesses a charm from its appearing to rise up of itself, and with little or no effort on the poet's part to form a picture, it is not unfrequently chargeable with repetition—sometimes, perhaps, with a sameness which, but for the inherent interest in the objects themselves, might be felt a little wearisome—there is so much still life. They are both most affectionately disposed towards all manner of birds. Grahame's “Birds of Scotland” is a delightful poem; yet its best passages are not superior to some of Clare's about the same charming creatures—and they are both ornithologists after Audubon's and our own heart. Were all that has been well written in English verse about birds to be gathered together, what a sweet set of volumes it would make! And how many, think ye—three, six, twelve? That would be indeed an aviary—

the only one we can think of with pleasure—out of the hedge-rows and the woods. Tories as we are, we never see a wild bird on the wing without inhaling in silence “the Cause of Liberty all over the world!” We feel then that it is indeed “like the air we breathe—without it we die.” So do they. We have been reading lately, for a leisure hour or two of an evening—a volume by a worthy German, Doctor Bechstein—on Cage Birds. The slave-dealer never for a moment suspects the wickedness of kidnapping young and old—crimping them for life—teaching them to draw water—and, *oh nefas!* to sing! He seems to think that only in confinement do they fulfil the ends of their existence—even the skylark. Yet he sees them, one and all, subject to the most miserable diseases—and rotting away within the wires. Why could not the Doctor have taken a stroll into the country once or twice a week, and in one morning or evening hour laid in sufficient music to serve him during the intervening time, without causing a single bosom to be ruffled for his sake? Shoot them—spit them—pie them—pickle them—eat them—but imprison them not; we speak as Conservatives—murder rather than immure them—for more forgivable far it is to cut short their songs at the height of glee, than to protract them in a rueful simulation of music, in which you hear the same sweet notes, but if your heart thinks at all, “a voice of weeping and of loud lament” all unlike, alas! to the congratulation that from the free choirs is ringing so exultingly in their native woods.

How prettily Clare writes of the “insect youth.”

“These tiny loiterers on the barley’s beard,
And happy units of a numerous herd
Of playfellows the laughing Summer brings,
Mocking the sunshine on their glittering wings,
How merrily they creep, and run, and fly!
No kin they bear to labour’s drudgery,
Smoothing the velvet of the pale hedge-rose;
And where they fly for dinner no one knows—
The dewdrops feed them not—they love the shine
Of noon, whose sons may bring them golden wine.
All day they’re playing in their Sunday dress—
When night repose, for they can do no less;
Then to the heath-bell’s purple hood they fly,
And like to princes in their slumbers lie,
Secure from rain, and dropping dews, and all,
In silken beds and roomy painted hall.
So merrily they spend their summer-day,
Now in the corn-fields, now in the new-mown hay.
One almost fancies that such happy things,
With colour’d hoods and richly-burnish’d wings,
Are fairy folk, in splendid masquerade
Disguised, as if of mortal folk afraid.
Keeping their joyous pranks a mystery still,
Lest glaring day should do their secrets ill.”

Time has been—nor yet very long ago—when such unpretending poetry as this—humble indeed in every sense, but nevertheless the product of genius which speaks for itself audibly and clearly in lowliest strains—would not have passed by unheeded or unbeloved; now-a-days it may to many who hold their heads high, seem of no more worth than an old song. But as Wordsworth says,

“Pleasures newly found are sweet,
Though they lie about our feet;”

and if stately people would but stoop and look about their paths, which do not always run along the heights, they would often make discoveries of what concerned them more than speculations among the stars.

It is not to be thought, however, that the Northamptonshire Peasant does not often treat earnestly of the common pleasures and pains, the cares and occupations of that condition of life in which he was born, and has passed all his days. He knows them well, and has illustrated them well, though seldom in his later than in his earlier poems; and we cannot help thinking that he might greatly extend his popularity, which in England is considerable, by devoting his Rural Muse to subjects lying within his ken, and of everlasting interest. Bloomfield’s reputation rests on his “Farmer’s Boy”—on some exquisite passages on “News from the Farm”—and on some of the tales and pictures in his “May-day with the Muses.” His smaller poems are very inferior to those of Clare—But the Northamptonshire Peasant has written nothing in which all honest English hearts must delight, at all comparable with those truly rural compositions of the Suffolk shoemaker. It is in his power to do so—would he but earnestly set himself to the work. He must be more familiar with all the ongoing of rural life than his compeer could have been; nor need he fear to tread again the same ground, for it is as new as if it had never been touched, and will continue to be so till the end of time. The soil in which the native virtues of the English character grow, is unexhausted and inexhaustible; let him break it up on any spot he chooses, and poetry will spring to light like clover from lime. Nor need he fear being an imitator. His mind is an original one, his most indifferent verses prove it; for though he must have read much poetry since his earlier day—doubtless all our best modern poetry—he retains his own style, which though it is not marked by any very strong characteristics, is yet sufficiently peculiar to show that it belongs to himself, and is a natural gift. Pastorals—eclogues—and idyls—in a hundred forms—remain to be written by such poets as he and his brethren; and there can be no doubt at all, that if he will scheme something of the kind, and begin upon it, without waiting to know fully or clearly what he may be intending, that before three winters, with their long nights, are gone, he will find himself in possession of more than mere materials for a volume of poems that will meet with general acceptance, and give him a permanent place by the side of him he loves so well—Robert Bloomfield.

Ebenezer Elliot (of whom more another day) claims with pride to be the Poet of the Poor—and the poor might well be proud, did they know it, that they have such a poet. Not a few of them know it now—and many will know it in future; for a muse of fire like his will yet send its illumination “into dark deep holds.” May it consume all the noxious vapours that infest such regions—and purify the atmosphere—till the air breathed there be the breath of life. But the poor have other poets besides him—Crabbe and Burns. We again mention their names—and no more. Kindly spirits were they both; but Burns had experienced all his poetry—and therefore his poetry is an embodiment of national character. We say it not in disparagement or reproof of Ebenezer

nezer—conspicuous over all—for let all men speak as they think or feel—but how gentle in all his noblest inspirations was Robin! He did not shun sins or sorrows; but he told the truth of the poor man's life, when he showed that it was, on the whole, virtuous and happy—bear witness those immortal strains, "The Twa Dogs," "The Vision," "The Cottar's Saturday night," the songs voiced all braid Scotland thorough by her boys and virgins, say rather her lads and lassies—while the lark sings aloft and the linnet below, the mavis in the golden broom accompanying the music in the golden cloud. We desire—not in wilful delusion—but in earnest hope—in devout trust—that poetry shall show that the paths of the peasant poor are paths of pleasantness and peace. If they should seem in that light even pleasanter and more peaceful than they ever now can be below the sun, think not that any evil can arise "to mortal man who liveth here by toil" from such representations—for imagination and reality are not two different things—they blend in life; but there the darker shadows do often, alas! prevail—and sometimes may be felt even by the hand; whereas in poetry the lights are triumphant—and gazing on the glory men's hearts burn within them—and they carry the joy in among their own griefs, till despondency gives way to exultation, and the day's darg of this worky world is lightened by a dawn of dreams.

This is the effect of all good poetry—according to its power—of the poetry of Robert Bloomfield as of the poetry of Robert Burns. John Clare, too, is well entitled to a portion of such praise; and therefore his name deserves to become a household word in the dwellings of the rural poor. Living in leisure among the scenes in which he once toiled, may he once more contemplate them all without disturbance. Having lost none of his sympathies, he has learnt to refine them all and see into their source—and wiser in his simplicity than they who were formerly his yokefellows are in theirs, he knows many things well which they know imperfectly or not at all, and is privileged therein to be their teacher. Surely in an age when the smallest contribution to science is duly estimated, and useful knowledge not only held in honour but diffused, poetry ought not to be despised, more especially when emanating from them who belong to the very condition which they seek to illustrate, and whose ambition it is to do justice to its natural enjoyments and appropriate virtues. In spite of all they have suffered, and still suffer, the peasantry of England are a race that may be regarded with better feelings than pride. We look forward confidently to the time when education—already in much good—and if the plans of the wisest counsellors prevail, about to become altogether good—will raise at once their condition and their character. The Government has its duties to discharge—clear as day. And what is not in the power of the gentlemen of England? Let them exert that power to the utmost—and then indeed they will deserve the noble name of "Aristocracy." We speak not thus in reproach—for they better deserve that name

than the same order in any other country; but in no other country are such interests given to that order in trust—and as they attend to that trust is the glory or the shame—the blessing or the curse—of their high estate.

But let us retrace our footsteps in moralizing mood, not unminged with sadness—to the Mausoleum of Burns. Scotland is abused by England for having starved Burns to death, or for having suffered him to drink himself to death, out of a cup filled to the brim with bitter disappointment and black despair. England lies. There is our gage-glove, let her take it up, and then for mortal combat with sword and spear—only not on horseback—for, for reasons on which it would be idle to be more explicit, we always fight now on foot, and have sent our high horse to graze all the rest of his life on the mountains of the moon. Well then, Scotland met Burns, on his first sun-burst, with one exulting acclaim. Scotland bought and read his poetry, and Burns, for a poor man, became rich—rich to his heart's desire—and reached the summit of his ambition, in the way of this world's life, in a—Farm. Blihe Robin would have scorned "an awmous" from any hands but from those of nature; nor in those days needed he help from woman-born. True, that times begun by and by to go rather hard with him, and he with them; for his mode of life was not

"Such as grave livers do in Scotland use," and as we sow we must reap. His day of life began to darken ere meridian—and the darkness doubtless had brought disturbance before it had been perceived by any eyes but his own—for people are always looking to themselves and their own lot; and how much mortal misery may for years be daily depicted in the face, figure, or manners even of a friend, without our seeing or suspecting it! Till all at once he makes a confession, and we then know that he has been long numbered among the most wretched of the wretched—the slave of his own sins and sorrows—or thrall'd beneath those of another, to whom fate may have given sovereign power over his whole life. Well, then—or rather ill, then—Burns behaved as most men do in misery—and the farm going to ruin—that is, crop and stock to pay the rent—he desired to be—and was made—an Exciseman. And for that—you ninny—you are whinnying scornfully at Scotland! Many a better man than yourself—beg your pardon—has been, and is now, an Exciseman. Nay, to be plain with you—we doubt if your education has been sufficiently intellectual for an Exciseman. We never heard it said of you,

"And even the story ran that he could gauge."

Burns then was made what he desired to be—what he was fit for—though you are not—and what was in itself respectable—an Exciseman. His salary was not so large certainly as that of the Bishop of Durham—or even of London—but it was certainly larger than that of many a curate at that time doing perhaps double or treble duty in those dioceses, without much audible complaint on their part, or outcry from Scotland against blind and brutal English bishops, or against beggarly England, for starving

her pauper-curates, by whatever genius or erudition adorned. Burns died an Exciseman, it is true, at the age of thirty-seven; on the same day died an English curate we could name, a surpassing scholar, and of stainless virtue, blind, palsied, "old and miserably poor"—without as much money as would bury him; and no wonder, for he never had the salary of a Scotch Exciseman.

Two blacks—nay twenty—won't make a white. True—but one black is as black as another—and the Southern Pot, brazen as it is, must not abuse with impunity the Northern Pan. But now to the right nail, and let us knock it on the head. What did England do for her own Bloomfield? He was not in genius to be spoken of in the same year with Burns—but he was beyond all compare, and out of all sight, the best poet that had arisen produced by England's lower orders. He was the most spiritual shoemaker that ever handled an awl. The Farmer's Boy is a wonderful poem—and will live in the poetry of England. Did England, then, keep Bloomfield in comfort, and scatter flowers along the smooth and sunny path that led him to the grave? No. He had given him, by some minister or other, we believe Lord Sidmouth, a paltry place in some office or other—most uncongenial with all his nature and all his habits—of which the shabby salary was insufficient to purchase for his family even the bare necessities of life. He thus dragged out for many long obscure years a sickly existence, as miserable as the existence of a good man can be made by narrowest circumstances—and all the while Englishmen were scoffingly scorning, with haughty and bitter taunts, the patronage that, at his own earnest desire, made Burns an Exciseman. Nay, when Southey, late in Bloomfield's life, and when it was drawing mournfully to a close, proposed a contribution for his behoof, and put down his own five pounds, how many purse-strings were untied? how much fine gold was poured out for the indigent son of genius and virtue? Shame shuffles the sum out of sight—for it was not sufficient to have bought the manumission of an old negro slave.

It was no easy matter to deal rightly with such a man as Burns. In those disturbed and distracted times, still more difficult was it to carry into execution any designs for his good—and much was there even to excuse his countrymen then in power for looking upon him with an evil eye. But Bloomfield led a pure, peaceable, and blameless life. Easy, indeed, would it have been to make him happy—but he was as much forgotten as if he had been dead; and when he died—did England mourn over him—or, after having denied him bread, give him so much as a stone? No. He dropt into the grave with no other lament we ever heard of but a few copies of poorish verses in some of the Annuals, and seldom or never now does one hear a whisper of his name. O fie! well may the white rose blush red—and the red rose turn pale. Let England then leave Scotland to her shame about Burns; and, thinking of her own treatment of Bloomfield, cover her own face with both her hands, and con-

fess that it was pitiful. At least, if she will not hang down her head in humiliation for her own neglect of her own "poetic child," let her not hold it high over Scotland for the neglect of hers—palliated as that neglect was by many things—and since, in some measure, expiated by a whole nation's tears shed over her great poet's grave:

What! not a word for Allan Ramsay? Theocritus was a pleasant Pastoral, and Sicilia sees him among the stars. But all his dear Idyls together are not equal in worth to the single Gentle Shepherd. Habbie's How is a hallowed place now among the green airy Pentlands. Sacred for ever the solitary murmur of that waterfa'!

"A flowerie howm, between twa verdant braes,
Where lassies use to wash and bleach their claes;
A trotting burnie, wimpling through the ground,
It's channel pebbles, shining, smooth, and round:
Here view twa barefoot beauties, clean and clear,
'Twill please your eye, then gratify your ear;
While Jenny what she wishes discomfends,
And Meg, with better sense, true love defends!"

"About them and sielike," is the whole poem. Yet "faithful loves shall memorize the song." Without any scenery but that of rafters, which overhead fancy may suppose a grove, 'tis even yet sometimes acted by rustics in the barn, though nothing on this earth will ever persuade a low-born Scottish lass to take a part in a play; while delightful is felt, even by the lords and ladies of the land, the simple Drama of humble life; and we ourselves have seen a high-born maiden look "beautiful exceedingly" as Patie's Betrothed, kilted to the knee in the kirtle of a Shepherdess.

We have been gradually growing national overmuch, and are about to grow even more so, therefore ask you to what era, pray, did Thomson belong? To none. Thomson had no precursor—and till Cowper no follower. He effulged all at once sunlike—like Scotland's storm-loving, mist-enamoured sun, which till you have seen on a day of thunder, you cannot be said ever to have seen the sun. Cowper followed Thomson merely in time. We should have had the Task, even had we never had the Seasons. These two were "Heralds of a mighty train ensuing;" add them, then, to the worthies of our own age, and they belong to it—and all the rest of the poetry of the modern world—to which add that of the ancient—if multiplied by ten in quantity—and by twenty in quality—would not so variously, so vigorously, and so truly image the form and pressure, the life and spirit of the mother of us all—Nature. Are then the Seasons and the Task Great Poems? Yes,—Why? What! Do you need to be told that that Poem must be great, which was the first to paint the rolling mystery of the year, and to show that all its Seasons are but the varied God? The idea was original and sublime; and the fulfilment thereof so complete, that some six thousand years having elapsed between the creation of the world and of that poem, some sixty thousand, we prophesy, will elapse between the appearance of that poem and the publication of another equally great, on a subject external to the mind, equally magnificent. We further presume, that you hold sacred the Hearth.

Now, in the Task, the Hearth is the heart of the poem, just as it is of a happy house. No other poem is so full of domestic happiness—humble and high; none is so breathed over by the spirit of the Christian religion.

Poetry, which, though not dead, had long been sleeping in Scotland, was restored to waking life by THOMSON. His genius was national; and so, too, was the subject of his first and greatest song. By saying that his genius was national, we mean that its temperament was enthusiastic and passionate, and that, though highly imaginative, the sources of its power lay in the heart. The Castle of Indolence is distinguished by purer taste and finer fancy; but with all its exquisite beauties, that poem is but the vision of a dream. The Seasons are glorious realities; and the charm of the strain that sings the "rolling year" is its truth. But what mean we by saying that the Seasons are a national subject?—do we assert that they are solely Scottish? That would be too bold, even for us; but we scruple not to assert, that Thomson has made them so, as far as might be without insult, injury, or injustice, to the rest of the globe. His suns rise and set in Scottish heavens; his "deep-fermenting tempests are brewed in grim evening" Scottish skies; Scottish is his thunder of cloud and cataract; his "vapours, and snows, and storms" are Scottish; and, strange as the assertion would have sounded in the ears of Samuel Johnson, Scottish are his woods, their sigh, and their roar; nor less their stillness, more awful amidst the vast multitude of steady stems, than when all the sullen pine-tops are swinging to the hurricane. A dread love of his native land was in his heart when he cried in the solitude—

"Hail, kindred glooms! congenial horrors hail!"

The genius of HOME was national—and so, too, was the subject of his justly famous Tragedy of Douglas. He had studied the old Ballads; their simplicities were sweet to him as wall-flowers on ruins. On the story of Gill Morice, who was an Earl's son, he founded the Tragedy, which surely no Scottish eyes ever witnessed without tears. Are not these most Scottish lines?—

"Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness!"

And these even more so—

"Red came the river down, and loud and oft
The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd!"

The Scottish Tragedian in an evil hour crossed the Tweed, riding on horseback all the way to London. His genius got Anglified, took a consumption, and perished in the prime of life. But nearly half a century afterwards, on seeing the Siddons in *Lady Randolph*, and hearing her low, deep, wild, wo-begone voice exclaim, "My beautiful! my brave!" "the aged harper's soul awoke," and his dim eyes were again lighted up for a moment with the fires of genius—say rather for a moment bedewed with the tears of sensibility re-awakened from decay and dotage.

The genius of Beattie was national, and so was the subject of his charming song—The Minstrel. For what is its design? He tells us, to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born

in a rude age, from the first dawning of reason and fancy, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a Scottish Minstrel; that is, as an itinerant poet and musician—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

"There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,

A shepherd swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires perchance in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves and vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the North Countrie;
A nation famed for song and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil, serene amid alarms;
Inflexible in faith, invincible in arms.

"The shepherd swain, of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough he never saw'd;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living waters from the rock;
The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er
they went."

Did patriotism ever inspire genius with sentiment more Scottish than *that*? Did imagination ever create scenery more Scottish, Manners, Morals, Life?

"Lo! where the stripling wrapt in wonder roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine;
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And echo swells the chorus to the skies."

Beattie chants there like a man who had been at the Linn of Dee. He wore a wig, it is true; but at times, when the fit was on him, he wrote like the unshorn Apollo.

The genius of Grahame was national, and so too was the subject of his first and best poem—The Sabbath.

"How still the morning of the hallow'd day!"

is a line that could have been uttered only by a holy Scottish heart. For we alone know what is indeed Sabbath silence—an earnest of everlasting rest. To our hearts, the very birds of Scotland sing holly on that day. A sacred smile is on the dewy flowers. The lilies look whiter in their loveliness; the blush-rose red dens in the sun with a diviner dye; and with a more celestial scent the hoary hawthorn sweetens the wilderness. Sorely disturbed of yore, over the glens and hills of Scotland, was the Day of Peace!

"Oh, the great goodness of the *Saints of Old*!"

the Covenanters. Listen to the Sabbath bard—

"With them each day was holy; but that morn
On which the angel said, 'See where the Lord
Was laid,' joyous arose; to die that day
Was bliss. Long ere the dawn by devious ways,
O'er hills, through woods, o'er dreary wastes, they
sought

The upland mairs where rivers, there but brooks,
Dispart to different seas. Fast by such brooks
A little glen is sometimes scoop'd, a plat
With greensward gay, and flowers that strangers seem
Amid the heathery wild, that all around
Fatigues the eye: in solitudes like these
Thy persecuted children, Scotia, foil'd
A tyrant's and a bigot's bloody laws.
There, leaning on his spear, (one of the array
Whose gleam, in former days, had scathed the rose
On England's banner, and had powerless struck
The infatuate monarch, and his wavering host!)
The lyart veteran heard the word of God
By Cameron thunder'd, or by Renwick pour'd
In gentle stream: then rose the song, the loud
Acclaim of praise. The wheeling plow ceased
Her plaint; the solitary place was glad;
And on the distant cairn the watcher's ear

Caught doubtfully at times the breeze-borne note.
 But years more gloomy follow'd; and no more
 The assembled people dared, in face of day,
 To worship God, or even at the dead
 Of night, save when the wintry storm raved fierce,
 And thunder-peals compelled the men of blood
 To couch within their dens; then dauntlessly
 The scatter'd few would meet, in some deep dell
 By rocks o'ercanopied, to hear the voice,
 Their faithful pastor's voice. He by the gleam
 Of sheeted lightning oped the sacred book,
 And words of comfort spake; over their souls
 His accents soothing came, as to her young
 The heathfowl's plumes, when, at the close of eve,
 She gathers in, mournful, her brood dispersed
 By murderous sport, and o'er the remnant spreads
 Fondly her wings; close nestling 'neath her breast
 They cherished cower amid the purple bloom."

Not a few other sweet singers or strong, native to this nook of our isle, might we now in these humble pages lovingly commemorate; and "four shall we mention, dearer than the rest," for sake of that virtue, among many virtues, which we have been lauding all along, their nationality;—These are *AIRD* and *MOTHERWELL*, (of whom another hour,) *MOIR* and *POLLOK*.

Of *Moir*, our own "delightful Delta," as we love to call him—and the epithet now by right appertains to his name—we shall now say simply this, that he has produced many original pieces which will possess a permanent place in the poetry of Scotland. Delicacy and grace characterize his happiest compositions; some of them are beautiful in a cheerful spirit that has only to look on nature to be happy; and others breathe the simplest and purest pathos. His scenery, whether sea-coast or inland, is always truly Scottish; and at times his pen drops touches of light on minute objects, that till then had slumbered in the shade, but now "shine well where they stand" or lie, as component and characteristic parts of our lowland landscapes. Let others labour away at long poems, and for their pains get neglect or oblivion; *Moir* is seen as he is in many short ones, which the Scottish Muses may "not willingly let die." And that must be a pleasant thought when it touches the heart of the mildest and most modest of men, as he sits by his family-fire, beside those most dear to him, after a day past in smoothing, by his skill, the bed and the brow of pain, in restoring sickness to health, in alleviating sufferings that cannot be cured, or in mitigating the pangs of death.

Pollok had great original genius, strong in a sacred sense of religion. Such of his short compositions as we have seen, written in early youth, were but mere copies of verses, and gave little or no promise of power. But his soul was working in the green moorland solitudes round about his father's house, in the wild and beautiful parishes of Eaglesham and Mearns, separated by thee, O *Yeorn*! sweetest of pastoral streams, that murmur through the west, as under those broomy and birken banks and trees, where the gray-linties sing, is formed the clear junction of the rills, issuing, the one from the hill-spring above the Black-waterfall, and the other from the *Brother-loch*. The poet in prime of youth (he died in his twenty-seventh year) embarked on a high and adventurous emprise, and voyaged the illimitable Deep. His spirit expanded its wings, and in a holy pride felt them to be broad, as they hovered over the dark abyss. The "Course

of Time," for so young a man, was a vast achievement. The book he loved best was the Bible, and his style is often scriptural. Of our poets, he had studied, we believe, but *Milton*, *Young*, and *Byron*. He had much to learn in composition; and, had he lived, he would have looked almost with humiliation on much that is at present eulogized by his devoted admirers. But the soul of poetry is there, though often dimly developed, and many passages there are, and long ones too, that heave, and hurry, and glow along in a divine enthusiasm.

"His ears he closed, to listen to the strains
 That *Sion's* bards did consecrate of old,
 And fix'd his *Pindus* upon *Lebanon*."

Let us fly again to England, and leaving for another hour *Shelley* and *Hunt* and *Keates*, and *Croly* and *Milman* and *Heber*, and *Sterling* and *Milnes* and *Tennyson*, with some younger aspirants of our own day; and *Gray*, *Collins*, and *Goldsmith*, and lesser stars of that constellation, let us alight on the verge of that famous era when the throne was occupied by *Dryden*, and then by *Pope*—searching still for a Great Poem. Did either of them ever write one? No—never. Sir *Walter* says finely of glorious *John*,

"And *Dryden* in immortal strain,
 Had raised the *Table Round* again,
 But that a ribald King and Court
 Bade him play on to make them sport,
 The world defrauded of the high design,
 Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line."

But why, we ask, did *Dryden* suffer a ribald king and court to debase and degrade him, and strangle his immortal strain? Because he was poor. But could he not have died of cold, thirst, and hunger—of starvation? Have not millions of men and women done so, rather than sacrifice their conscience! And shall we grant to a great poet that indulgence which many an humble hind would have flung with scorn in our teeth, and rather than have availed himself of it, faced the fagot, or the halter, or the stake set within the sea-flood? But it is satisfactory to know that *Dryden*, though still glorious *John*, was not a Great Poet. He was seldom visited by the pathetic or the sublime—else had his genius held fast its integrity—been ribald to no ribald—and indignantly kicked to the devil both court and king. But what a master of reasoning in verse! And of verse what a volume of fire! "The long-resounding march and energy divine." *Pope*, again, with the common frailties of humanity, was an ethereal creature—and played on his own harp with finest taste, and wonderful execution. We doubt, indeed, if such a finished style has ever been heard since from any one of the King *Apollo's* musicians. His versification may be monotonous, but without a sweet and potent charm only to ears of leather. That his poetry has no passion is the creed of critics "of *Cambyse's* vein;" *Melrose* and the *Unfortunate Lady* have made the world's heart to throb. As for *Imagination*, we shall continue till such time as that faculty has been distinguished from *Fancy*, to see it shining in the *Rape of the Lock*, with a lambent lustre; if high intel-

lect be not dominant in his *Epistles* and his *Essay on Man*, you will look for it in vain in the nineteenth century; all other *Satires* seem complimentary to their victims when read after the *Dunciad*—and could a man, whose heart was not heroic, have given us another *Iliad*, which, all unlike as it is to the Greek, may be read with transport, even after *Homer's*!

We have not yet, it would seem, found the objects of our search—a Great Poem. Let us extend our quest into the Elizabethan age. We are at once sucked into the theatre. With the whole drama of that age we are conversant and familiar; but whether we understand it or not, is another question. It aspires to give representations of Human Life in all its infinite varieties, and inconsistencies, and conflicts, and turmoils produced by the Passions. Time and space are not suffered to interpose their unities between the Poet and his vast design, who, provided he can satisfy the spectators by the pageant of their own passions moving across the stage, may exhibit there whatever he wills from life, death, or the grave. 'Tis a sublime conception—and sometimes has given rise to sublime performance; but has been crowned with full success in no hands but those of Shakspeare. Great as was the genius of many of the dramatists of that age, not one of them has produced a Great Tragedy. Great Tragedy indeed! What! without harmony or proportion in the plan—with all puzzling perplexities and inextricable entanglements in the plot, and with disgust and horror in the catastrophe? As for the characters, male and female—saw ye ever such a set of swaggers and ranti-poles as they often are in one act—Methodist preachers and demure young women at a love-feast in another—absolute heroes and heroines of high calibre in a third—and so on, changing and shifting name and nature, according to the laws of the Romantic Drama forsooth—but in hideous violation of the laws of nature—till the curtain falls over a heap of bodies huddled together, without regard to age or sex, as if they had been overtaken in liquor! We admit that there is gross exaggeration in the picture; but there is always truth in a tolerable caricature—and this is one of a tragedy of Webster, Ford, or Massinger.

It is satisfactory to know that the good sense, and good feeling, and good taste of the people of England, will not submit to be belaboured by editors and critics into unqualified admiration of such enormities. The Old English Drama lies buried in the dust with all its tragedies. Never more will they move across the stage. Scholars read them, and often with delight, admiration, and wonder; for genius is a strange spirit, and has begotten strange children on the body of the Tragic Muse. In the closet it is pleasant to peruse the countenances, at once divine, human, and brutal, of the incomprehensible monsters—to scan their forms, powerful though misshapen—to watch their movements, vigorous though distorted—and to hold up one's hands in amazement on hearing them not seldom discourse most excellent music. But we should shudder to see them on the stage enacting the parts of men and women—and call for the manager. All has been

done for the least deformed of the tragedies of the Old English Drama that humanity could do, enlightened by the Christian religion; but Nature has risen up to vindicate herself against such misrepresentations as they afford; and sometimes finds it all she can do to stomach Shakspeare.

But the monstrosities we have mentioned are not the worst to be found in the Old English Drama. Others there are that, till civilized Christendom fall back into barbarous Heathendom, must for ever be unendurable to human ears, whether long or short—we mean the obscenities. That sin is banished for ever from our literature. The poet who might dare to commit it, would be immediately hooted out of society, and sent to roost in barns among the owls. But the Old English Drama is stuffed with ineffable pollutions; and full of passages that the street-walker would be ashamed to read in the stews. We have not seen that volume of the Family Dramatists which contains Massinger. But if made fit for female reading, his plays must be mutilated and mangled out of all likeness to the original wholes. To free them even from the grossest impurities, without destroying their very life, is impossible; and it would be far better to make a selection of fine passages, after the manner of Lamb's Specimens—but with a severer eye—than to attempt in vain to preserve their character as plays, and at the same time to expunge all that is too disgusting, perhaps, to be dangerous to boys and virgins. Full-grown men may read what they choose—perhaps without suffering from it; but the modesty of the young clear eye must not be profaned—and we cannot, for our own part, imagine a Family Old English Dramatist.

And here again bursts upon us the glory of the Greek Drama. The Athenians were as wicked, as licentious, as polluted, and much more so, we hope, than ever were the English; but they debased not with their gross vices their glorious tragedies. Nature in her higher moods alone, and most majestic aspects, trod their stage. Buffoons, and ribalds, and zanies, and “rude indecent clowns,” were confined to comedies; and even there they too were idealized, and resembled not the obscene samples that so often sicken us in the midst of “the acting of a dreadful thing” in our old theatre. They knew that “with other ministrations, thou, O Nature!” teachest thy handmaid Art to soothe the souls of thy congregated children—congregated to behold her noble goings-on, and to rise up and depart elevated by the transcendent pageant. The Tragic muse was in those days a Priestess—tragedies were religious ceremonies; for all the ancestral stories they celebrated were under consecration—the spirit of the ages of heroes and demigods descended over the vast amphitheatre; and thus were Æschylus, and Sophocles, and Euripides, the guardians of the national character, which we all know, was, in spite of all it suffered under, for ever passionately enamoured of all the forms of greatness.

Forgive us—spirit of Shakspeare! that seem'st to animate that high-brow'd bust—if indeed we have offered any show of irreve-

rence to thy name and nature; for now, in the noiselessness of midnight, to our awed but loving hearts do both appear divine! Forgive us—we beseech thee—that on going to bed—which we are just about to do—we may be able to compose ourselves to sleep—and dream of Miranda and Imogen, and Desdemona and Cordelia. Father revered of that holy family! by the strong light in the eyes of Innocence we beseech thee to forgive us!—Ha! what old ghost art thou—clothed in the weeds of more than mortal misery—mad, mad, mad—come and gone—was it Lear?

We have found then, it seems—at last—the object of our search—a Great Poem—ay—four Great Poems—Lear—Hamlet—Othello—Macbeth. And was the revealer of those high mysteries in his youth a deer-stealer in the parks of Warwickshire, a linkboy in London streets? And died he before his grand climactic in a dimish sort of a middle-sized tenebment in Stratford-on-Avon, of a surfeit from an over-dose of home-brewed humming ale? Such is the tradition.

Had we a daughter—an only daughter—we should wish her to be like

“Heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.”

In that one line has Wordsworth done an unappreciable service to Spenser. He has improved upon a picture in the Fairy Queen—making “the beauty still more beauteous,” by a single touch of a pencil dipped in moonlight, or in sunlight tender as Luna’s smiles. Through Spenser’s many nine-lined stanzas the lovely lady glides along her own world—and our eyes follow in delight the sinless wanderer. In Wordsworth’s one single celestial line we behold her neither in time nor space—an immortal omnipresent idea at one gaze occupying the soul.

And is not the Fairy Queen a Great Poem? Like the Excursion, it is at all events a long one—“slow to begin, and never ending.” That

fire was a fortunate one in which so many books of it were burnt. If no such fortunate fire ever took place, then let us trust that the moths drillingly devoured the manuscript—and that ’tis all safe. Purgatorial pains—unless indeed they should prove eternal—are insufficient punishment for the impious man who invented Allegory. If you have got any thing to say, sir, out with it—in one or other of the many forms of speech employed naturally by creatures to whom God has given the gift of “discourse of reason.” But beware of mispending your life in perversely attempting to make shadow substance, and substance shadow. Wonderful analogies there are among all created things, material and immaterial—and millions so fine that Poets alone discern them—and sometimes succeed in showing them in words. Most spiritual region of poetry—and to be visited at rare times and seasons—nor all life-long ought bard there to abide. For a while let the veil of Allegory be drawn before the face of Truth, that the light of its beauty may shine through it with a softened charm—dim and drear—like the moon gradually obscuring in its own halo on a dewy night. Such airwoven veil of Allegory is no human invention. The soul brought it with her when

“Trailing clouds of glory she did come
From heaven, which is her home.”

Sometimes, now and then, in moods strange and high—obey the bidding of the soul—and allegorize; but live not all life-long in an Allegory—even as Spenser did—Spenser the divine; for with all his heavenly genius—and brighter visions never met mortal eyes than his—what is he but a “dreamer among men,” and what may save that wondrous poem from the doom of oblivion?

To this conclusion must we come at last—that in the English language there is but one Great Poem. What! Not Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth? PARADISE LOST.

INCH-CRUIIN.

Oh! for the plumes and pinions of the poised Eagle, that we might now hang over Loch Lomond and all her isles! From what point of the compass would we come on our rushing vans? Up from Leven-banks, or down from Glenfalloch, or over the hill of Luss, or down to Rowardennan; and then up and away, as the chance currents in the sky might lead, with the Glory of Scotland, blue, bright, and breaking into foam, thousands on thousands of feet below, with every Island distinct in the peculiar beauty of its own youthful or ancient woods? For remember, that with the eagle’s wing we must also have the eagle’s eye; and all the while our own soul to look with such lens and such iris, and with its own endless visions to invest the pinnacles of all the far-down ruins of church

or castle, encompassed with the umbrage of undying oaks.

We should as soon think of penning a critique on Milton’s Paradise Lost as on Loch Lomond. People there are in the world, doubtless, who think them both too long; but to our minds, neither the one nor the other exceeds the due measure by a leaf or a league. You may, if it so pleaseth you, think it, in a mist, a Mediterranean sea. For then you behold many miles of tumbling waves, with no land beyond; and were a ship to rise up in full sail, she would seem voyaging on to some distant shore. Or you may look on it as a great arm only of the ocean, stretched out into the mountainous mainland. Or say, rather, some river of the first order, that shows to the sun Islands never

ceasing to adorn his course for a thousand leagues, in another day about to be lost in the dominion of the sea. Or rather look on it as it is, as Loch Lomond, the Loch of a hundred Isles—of shores laden with all kinds of beauty, throughout the infinite succession of bays and harbours—huts and houses sprinkled over the sides of its green hills, that ever and anon send up a wider smoke from villages clustering round the church-tower beneath the wooded rocks—halls half-hidden in groves, for centuries the residence of families proud of their Gaelic blood—forests that, however wide be the fall beneath the axe when their hour is come, yet, far as the eye can reach, go circling round the mountain's base, inhabited by the roe and the red-deer;—but we have got into a sentence that threatens to be without end—a dim, dreary, sentence, in the middle of which the very writer himself gets afraid of ghosts, and fervently prays for the period when he shall be again chatting with the reader on a shady seat, under his own paragraph and his own pear-tree.

Oh! for our admirable friend Mr. Smith of Jordanhill's matchless cutter, to glide through among the glittering archipelago! But we must be contented with a somewhat clumsy four-oared barge, wide and deep enough for a cattle ferry-boat. This morning's sunrise found us at the mouth of the Goblin's Cave on Loch Katrine, and among Lomond's lovely isles shall sunset leave us among the last glimmer of the softened gold. To which of all those lovely isles shall we drift before the wind on the small heaving and breaking waves? To Inch-Murrin, where the fallow-deer repose—or to the yew-shaded Inch-Caillach, the cemetery of Clan-Alpin—the Holy Isle of Nuns! One hushing afternoon hour may yet be ours on the waters—another of the slowly-walking twilight—that time which the gazing spirit is too wrapt to measure, while “sinks the Day-star in the ocean's bed”—and so on to midnight, the reign of silence and shadow, the resplendent Diana with her hair-halo, and all her star-nymphs, rejoicing round their Queen. Let the names of all objects be forgotten—and imagination roam over the works of nature, as if they lay in their primeval majesty, without one trace of man's dominion. Slow-sailing Heron, that cloud-like seekest thy nest on yonder lofty mass of pines—to us thy flight seems the very symbol of a long lone life of peace. As thou foldest thy wide wings on the topmost bough, beneath thee tower the unregarded Ruins, where many generations sleep. Onwards thou floatest like a dream, nor changest thy gradually descending course for the Eagle, that, far above thy line of travel, comes rushing unwearied from his prey in distant Isles of the sea. The Osprey! off—off—to Inch-Loning—or the dark cliffs of Glenfalloch, many leagues away, which he will reach almost like a thought! Close your eyes but for a moment—and when you look again, where is the Cloud-Cleaver now? Gone in the sunshine, and haply seated in his eyrie on Ben-Lomond's head.

But amidst all this splendour and magnificence, our eyes are drawn against our will, and by a sort of sad fascination which we cannot resist, along the glittering and dancing

waves, towards the melancholy shores of Inch-Cruin, the Island of the Afflicted. Beautiful is it by nature, with its bays, and fields, and woods, as any isle that sees its shadow in the deeps; but human sorrows have steeped it in eternal gloom, and terribly is it haunted to our imagination. Here no woodman's hut peeps from the glade—here are not seen the branching antlers of the deer moving among the boughs that stir not—no place of peace is this where the world-wearied hermit sits penitent in his cell, and prepares his soul for Heaven. Its inhabitants are a woful people, and all its various charms are hidden from their eyes, or seen in ghastly transfiguration; for here, beneath the yew-tree's shade, sit moping, or roam about with rueful lamentation, the soul-distracted and the insane! Ay—these sweet and pleasant murmurs break round a Lunatic Asylum! And the shadows that are now and then seen among the umbrage are laughing or weeping in the eclipse of reason, and may never know again aught of the real character of this world, to which, exiled as they are from it, they are yet bound by the ties of a common nature that, though sorely deranged, are not wholly broken, and still separate them by an awful depth of darkness from the beasts that perish.

Thither, love, yielding reluctantly at last to despair, has consented that the object on which all its wise solitudes had for years been unavailably bestowed both night and day, should be rowed over, perhaps at midnight, and when asleep, and left there with beings like itself, all dimly conscious of their doom. To many such the change may often bring little or no heed—for outward things may have ceased to impress, and they may be living in their own rueful world, different from all that we hear or behold. To some it may seem that they have been spirited away to another state of existence—beautiful, indeed, and fair to see, with all those lovely trees and shadows of trees; but still a miserable, a most miserable place, without one face they ever saw before, and haunted by glaring eyes that shoot forth fear, suspicion, and hatred. Others, again, there are, who know well the misty head of Ben-Lomond, which, with joyful pleasure-parties set free from the city, they had in other years exultingly scaled, and looked down, perhaps, in a solemn pause of their youthful ecstasy, on the far-off and melancholy Inch-Cruin! Thankful are they for such a haven at last—for they are remote from the disturbance of the incomprehensible life that bewildered them, and from the pity of familiar faces that was more than could be borne.

So let us float upon our oars behind the shadow of this rock, nor approach nearer the sacred retreat of misery. Let us not gaze too intently into the glades, for we might see some figure there who wished to be seen nevermore, and recognise in the hurrying shadow the living remains of a friend. How profound the hush! No sigh—no groan—no shriek—no voice—no tossing of arms—no restless chafing of feet! God in mercy has for a while calmed the congregation of the afflicted, and the Isle is overspread with a sweet Sabbath-

silence. What medicine for them like the breath of heaven—the dew—the sunshine—and the murmur of the wave! Nature herself is their kind physician, and sometimes not unfrequently brings them by her holy skill back to the world of clear intelligence and serene affection. They listen calmly to the blessed sound of the oar that brings a visit of friends—to sojourn with them for a day—or to take them away to another retirement, where they, in restored reason, may sit around the board, nor fear to meditate during the midnight watches on the dream, which, although dispelled, may in all its ghastliness return. There was a glorious burst of sunshine! And of all the Lomond Isles, what one rises up in the sudden illumination so bright as Inch-Cruin?

Methinks we see sitting in his narrow and low-roofed cell, careless of food, dress, sleep, or shelter alike, him who in the opulent mart of commerce was one of the most opulent, and devoted heart and soul to show and magnificence. His house was like a palace with its pictured and mirror'd walls, and the nights wore away to dance, revelry, and song. Fortune poured riches at his feet, which he had only to gather up; and every enterprise in which he took part, prospered beyond the reach of imagination. But all at once—as if lightning had struck the dome of his prosperity, and earthquake let down its foundations, it sank, cracked, and disappeared—and the man of a million was a houseless, infamous, and bankrupt beggar. In one day his proud face changed into the ghastly smiling of an idiot—he dragged his limbs in paralysis—and slavered out unmeaning words foreign to all the pursuits in which his active intellect had for many years been plunged. All his relations—to whom it was known he had never shown kindness—were persons in humble condition. Ruined creditors we do not expect to be very pitiful, and people asked what was to become of him till he died. A poor creature, whom he had seduced and abandoned to want, but who had succeeded to a small property on the death of a distant relation, remembered her first, her only love, when all the rest of the world were willing to forget him; and she it was who had him conveyed thither, herself sitting in the boat with her arm round the unconscious idiot, who now vegetates on the charity of her whom he betrayed. For fifteen years he has continued to exist in the same state, and you may pronounce his name on the busy Exchange of the city where he flourished and fell, and haply the person you speak to shall have entirely forgotten it.

The evils genius sometimes brings to its possessor have often been said and sung, perhaps with exaggerations, but not always without truth. It is found frequently apart from prudence and principle; and in a world constituted like ours, how can it fail to reap a harvest of misery or death? A fine genius, and even a high, had been bestowed on One who is now an inmate of that cottage-cell, peering between these two rocks. At College, he outstripped all his compeers by powers

equally versatile and profound—the first both in intellect and in imagination. He was a poor man's son—the only son of a working carpenter—and his father intended him for the church. But the youth soon felt that to him the trammels of a strict faith would be unbearable, and he lived on from year to year, uncertain what profession to choose. Meanwhile his friends, all inferior to him in talents and acquirements, followed the plain, open, and beaten path, that leads sooner or later to respectability and independence. He was left alone in his genius, useless, although admired—while those who had looked in high hopes on his early career, began to have their fears that they might never be realized. His first attempts to attract the notice of the public, although not absolute failures—for some of his compositions, both in prose and verse, were indeed beautiful—were not triumphantly successful, and he began to taste the bitterness of disappointed ambition. His wit and colloquial talents carried him into the society of the dissipated and the licentious; and before he was aware of the fact, he had got the character of all others the most humiliating—that of a man who knew not how to estimate his own worth, nor to preserve it from pollution. He found himself silently and gradually excluded from the higher circle which he had once adorned, and sunk inextricably into a lower grade of social life. His whole habits became loose and irregular; his studies were pursued but by fits and starts; his knowledge, instead of keeping pace with that of the times, became clouded and obscure, and even diminished; his dress was meaner; his manners hurried, and reckless, and wild, and ere long he became a slave to drunkenness, and then to every low and degrading vice.

His father died, it was said, of a broken heart—for to him his son had been all in all, and the unhappy youth felt that the death lay at his door. At last, shunned by most—tolerated but by a few for the sake of other times—domiciled in the haunts of infamy—loaded with a heap of paltry debts, and pursued by the hounds of the law, the fear of a prison drove him mad, and his whole mind was utterly and hopelessly overthrown. A few of the friends of his boyhood raised a subscription in his behoof—and within the gloom of these woods he has been shrouded for many years, but not unvisited once or twice a summer by some one, who knew, loved, and admired him in the morning of that genius that long before its meridian brightness had been so fatally eclipsed.

And can it be in cold and unimpassioned words like these that we thus speak of Thee and thy doom, thou Soul of fire, and once the brightest of the free, privileged by nature to walk along the mountain-ranges, and mix their spirits with the stars! Can it be that all thy glorious aspirations, by thyself forgotten, have no dwelling-place in the memory of one who loved thee so well, and had his deepest affection so profoundly returned! Thine was a heart once tremblingly alive to all the noblest and finest sympathies of our nature, and the humblest human sensibilities became beautiful when tinged by the light of thy imagination.

Thy genius invested the most ordinary objects with a charm not their own; and the vision it created thy lips were eloquent to disclose. What although thy poor old father died, because by thy hand all his hopes were shivered, and for thy sake poverty stripped even the coverlet from his dying-bed—yet we feel as if some dreadful destiny, rather than thy own crime, blinded thee to his fast decay, and closed thine ears in deafness to his beseeching prayer. Oh! charge not to creatures such as we all the fearful consequences of our misconduct and evil ways! We break hearts we would die to heal—and hurry on towards the grave those whom to save we would leap into the devouring fire. Many wondered in their anger that thou couldst be so callous to the old man's grief—and couldst walk tearless at his coffin. The very night of the day he was buried thou wert among thy wild companions, in a house of infamy, close to the wall of the churchyard. Was not that enough to tell us all that disease was in thy brain, and that reason, struggling with insanity, had changed sorrow to despair. But perfect forgiveness—forgiveness made tender by profoundest pity—was finally extended to thee by all thy friends—frail and erring like thyself in many things, although not so fatally misled and lost, because in the mystery of Providence not so irresistibly tried. It seemed as if thou hadst offended the Guardian Genius, who, according to the old philosophy which thou knewest so well, is given to every human being at his birth; and that then the angel left thy side, and Satan strove to drag thee to perdition. And hath any peace come to thee—a youth no more—but in what might have been the prime of manhood, bent down, they say, to the ground, with a head all floating with silver hairs—hath any peace come to thy distracted soul in these woods, over which there now seems again to brood a holy horror!—Yes—thy fine dark eyes are not wholly without intelligence as they look on the sun, moon, and stars; although all their courses seem now confused to thy imagination, once regular and ordered in their magnificence before that intellect which science claimed as her own. The harmonies of nature are not all lost on thy ear, poured forth throughout all seasons, over the world of sound and sight. Glimpses of beauty startle thee as thou wanderest along the shores of thy prison-isle; and that fine poetical genius, not yet extinguished altogether, although faint and flickering, gives vent to something like snatches of songs, and broken elegies, that seem to wail over the ruins of thy own soul! Such peace as ever visits them afflicted as thou art, be with thee in cell or on shore; nor lost to Heaven will be the wild moanings of—to us—thy unintelligible prayers!

But hark to the spirit-stirring voice of the bugle scaling the sky, and leaping up and down in echoes among the distant mountains! Such a strain animates the voltigeur, skirmishing in front of the line of battle, or sending flashes of sudden death from the woods. Alas! for him who now deludes his yet high heart with a few notes of the music that so often was accompanied by his sword waving on to glory. Unap-

palled was he ever in the whizzing and hissing fire—nor did his bold broad breast ever shrink from the bayonet, that with the finished fencer's art he has often turned aside when red with death. In many of the pitched battles of the Spanish campaigns his plume was conspicuous over the dark green lines, that, breaking asunder in fragments like those of the flowing sea, only to re-advance over the bloody fields, cleared the ground that was to be debated between the great armaments. Yet in all such desperate service he never received one single wound. But on a mid-day march, as he was gaily singing a love-song, the sun smote him to the very brain, and from that moment his right hand grasped the sword no more.

Not on the face of all the earth—or of all the sea—is there a spot of profounder peace than that isle that has long been his abode. But to him all the scene is alive with the pomp of war. Every far-off precipice is a fort, that has its own Spanish name—and the cloud above seems to his eyes the tricolor, or the flag of his own victorious country. War, that dread game that nations play at, is now to the poor insane soldier a mere child's pastime, from which sometimes he himself will turn with a sigh or a smile. For sense assails him in his delirium, for a moment and no more; and he feels that he is far away, and for ever, from all his companions in glory, in an asylum that must be left but for the grave! Perhaps in such moments he may have remembered the night, when at Badajos he led the forlorn hope; but even forlorn hope now hath he none, and he sinks away back into his delusions, at which even his brother sufferers smile—so foolish does the restless campaigner seem to these men of peace!

Lo! a white ghost-like figure, slowly issuing from the trees, and sitting herself down on a stone, with face fixed on the waters! Now she is so perfectly still, that had we not seen her motion thither, she and the rock would have seemed but one! Somewhat fantastically dressed, even in her apparent despair. Were we close to her, we should see a face yet beautiful, beneath hair white as snow. Her voice too, but seldom heard, is still sweet and low; and sometimes, when all are asleep, or at least silent, she begins at midnight to sing! She yet touches the guitar—an instrument in fashion in Scotland when she led the fashion—with infinite grace and delicacy—and the songs she loves best are those in a foreign tongue. For more than thirty years hath the unfortunate lady come to the water's edge daily, and hour after hour continue to sit motionless on that self-same stone, looking down into the loch. Her story is now almost like a dim tradition from other ages, and the history of those who come here often fades away into nothing. Everywhere else they are forgotten—here there are none who can remember. Who once so beautiful as the "Fair Portuguese!" It was said at that time that she was a Nun—but the sacred veil was drawn aside by the hand of love, and she came to Scotland with her deliverer! Yes, her deliverer! He delivered her from the gloom—often the peaceful gloom that hovers round the altar of Superstition—and

after a few years of love and life and joy—she sat where you now see her sitting, and the world she had adorned moved on in brightness and in music as before! Since there has to her been so much suffering—was there on her part no sin? No—all believed her to be guiltless, except one, whose jealousy would have seen falsehood lurking in an angel's eyes; but she was utterly deserted; and being in a strange country, worse than an orphan, her mind gave way; for say not—oh say not—that innocence can always stand against shame and despair! The hymns she sings at midnight are hymns to the Virgin; but all her songs are songs about love and chivalry, and knights that went crusading to the Holy Land. He who brought her from another sanctuary into the one now before us, has been dead many years. He perished in shipwreck—and 'tis thought that she sits there gazing down into the loch, as on the place where he sank or was buried; for when told that he was drowned, she shrieked, and made the sign of the cross—and since that long-ago day that stone has in all weathers been her constant seat.

Away we go westwards—like fire-worshippers devoutly gazing on the setting sun. And another isle seems to shoot across our path, separated suddenly, as if by magic, from the mainland. How beautiful, with its many crescents, the low-lying shores, carrying here and there a single tree quite into the water, and with verdant shallows guarding the lonely seclusion even from the keel of canoe! Round and round we row, but not a single landing place. Shall we take each of us a fair burden in his arms, and bear it to that knoll, whispering and quivering through the twilight with a few birches whose stems glitter like silver pillars in the shade? No—let us not disturb the silent people, now donning their green array for nightly revelries. It is the "Isle of Fairies," and on that knoll hath the fishermen often seen their Queen sitting on a throne, surrounded by myriads of creatures no taller than hare-bells; one splash of the oar—and all is vanished. There, it is said, lives among the Folk of Peace, the fair child who, many years ago, disappeared from her parents' shieling at

Inversnayde, and whom they vainly wept over as dead. One evening she had floated away by herself in a small boat—while her parents heard, without fear, the clang—duller and duller—of the oars, no longer visible in the distant moonshine. In an hour the returning vessel touched the beach—but no child was to be seen—and they listened in vain for the music of the happy creature's songs. For weeks the loch rolled and roared like the sea—nor was the body found any where lying on the shore. Long, long afterwards, some little white bones were interred in Christian burial, for the parents believed them to be the remains of their child—all that had been left by the bill of the raven. But not so thought many dwellers along the mountain-shores—for had not her very voice been often heard by the shepherds, when the unseen flight of Fairies sailed singing along up the solitary Glenfalloch, away over the moors of Tynedrum, and down to the sweet Dalmally, where the shadow of Cruachan darkens the old ruins of melancholy Kilchurn? The lost child's parents died in their old age—but she, 'tis said, is unchanged in shape and features—the same fair thing she was the evening that she disappeared, only a shade of sadness is on her pale face, as if she were pining for the sound of human voices, and the gleam of the peat-fire of the shieling. Ever, when the Fairy-court is seen for a moment beneath the glimpses of the moon, she is sitting by the side of the gracious Queen. Words of might there are, that if whispered at right season, would yet recall her from the shadowy world, to which she has been spirited away; but small sentinels stand at their stations round the isle, and at nearing of human breath, a shrill warning is given from sedge and water-lily, and like dew-drops melt away the phantoms, while, mixed with peals of little laughter, overhead is heard the winnowing of wings. For the hollow of the earth, and the hollow of the air, is their Invisible Kingdom; and when they touch the herbage or flowers of this earth of ours, whose lonely places they love, then only are they revealed to human eyes—at all times else to our senses unexistent as dreams!

A DAY AT WINDERMERE.

OLD and gouty, we are confined to our chair; and occasionally, during an hour of rainless sunshine, are wheeled by female hands along the gravel-walks of our Policy, an unrepining and philosophical valetudinarian. Even the Crutch is laid up in ordinary, and is encircled with cobwebs. A monstrous spider has there set up his rest; and our still study ever and anon hearkens to the shrill buzz of some poor fly expiring between those formidable forceps—just as so many human ephemerals have breathed their last beneath the bite of his in-

dulgent master. 'Tis pleasure to look at Domitian—so we love to call him—sallying from the centre against a wearied wasp, lying, like a silk worm, circumvolved in the inextricable toils, and then seizing the sinner by the nape of the neck, like Christopher with a Cockney, to see the emperor haul him away into the charnel-house. But we have often less savage recreations—such as watching our bee-hives when about to send forth colonies—feeding our pigeons, a purple people that dazzle the daylight—gathering roses as they choke our smal

chariot-wheels with their golden orbs—eating grapes out of vine-leaf-draped baskets, beautifying beneath the gentle fingers of the Gentle into fairy network graceful as the gossamer—drinking elder-flower frontiniae from invisible glasses, so transparent in its yellowness seems the liquid radiance—at one moment eyeing a page of *Paradise Lost*, and at another of *Paradise Regained*; for what else is the face of her who often visiteth our Eden, and whose coming and whose going is ever like a heavenly dream. Then laying back our head upon the cushion of our triumphal car, and with half-shut eyes, subsiding slowly into haunted sleep or slumber, with our fine features up to heaven, a saint-like image, such as Raphael loved to paint, or Flaxman to embue with the soul of stillness in the life-hushed marble. Such, dearest reader, are some of our pastimes—and so do we contrive to close our ears to the sound of the scythe of Saturn, ceaselessly sweeping over the earth, and leaving, at every stride of the mower, a swathe more rueful than ever, after a night of shipwreck, did strew with ghastliness a lee sea-shore!

Thus do we make a virtue of necessity—and thus contentment wreathes with silk and velvet the prisoner's chains. Once were we—long, long ago—restless as a sunbeam on the restless wave—rapid as a river that seems engaged with all impediments, but all the while in passionate love

"Doth make sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,"—

strong as a steed let loose from Arab's tent in the oasis to slake his thirst at the desert well—fierce in our harmless joy as a red-deer belling on the hills—tameless as the eagle sporting in the storm—gay as the "dolphin on a tropic sea"—"mad as young bulls"—and wild as a whole wilderness of adolescent lions. But now—alas! and alack-a-day! the sunbeam is but a patch of sober verdure—the river is changed into a canal—the "desert-born" is foundered—the red-deer is slow as an old ram—the eagle has forsaken his cliff and his clouds, and hops among the gooseberry bushes—the dolphin has degenerated into a land tortoise—without danger now might a very child take the bull by the horns—and though something of a lion still, our roar is like that of the nightingale, "most musical, most melancholy"—and, as we attempt to shake our mane, your grandmother—fair pacer—cannot choose but weep.

It speaks folios in favour of our philanthropy, to know that, in our own imprisonment, we love to see all life free as air. Would that by a word of ours we could clothe all human shoulders with wings! would that by a word of ours we could plume all human spirits with thoughts strong as the eagle's pinions, that they might winnow their way into the empyrean! Tories! Yes! we are Tories. Our faith is in the Divine right of kings—but easy, my boys, easy—all free men are kings, and they hold their empire from heaven. That is our political—philosophical—moral—religious creed. In its spirit we have lived—and in its spirit we hope to die—not on the scaffold like Sidney—no—no—no—not by any manner of means like Sidney on the

scaffold—but like ourselves, on a hair-mattress above a feather-bed, our head decently sunk in three pillows and one bolster, and our frame stretched out unagitatedly beneath a white counterpane. But meanwhile—though almost as unlocomotive as the dead in body—there is perpetual motion in our minds. Sleep is one thing, and stagnation is another—as is well known to all eyes that have ever seen, by moonlight and midnight, the face of Christopher North, or of Windermere.

Windermere! Why, at this blessed moment we behold the beauty of all its intermingling isles. There they are—all gazing down on their own reflected loveliness in the magic mirror of the air-like water, just as many a holy time we have seen them all agaze, when, with suspended air and suspended breath—no sound but a ripple on the Naiad's bow, and a beating at our own heart—motionless in our own motionless bark—we seemed to float midway down that beautiful abyss between the heaven above and the heaven below, on some strange terrestrial scene composed of trees and the shadows of trees, by the imagination made indistinguishable to the eye, and as delight deepened into dreams, all lost at last, clouds, groves, water, air, sky, in their various and profound confusion of supernatural peace. But a sea-born breeze is on Bowness Bay; all at once the lake is blue as the sky; and that evanescent world is felt to have been but a vision. Like swans that had been asleep in the airless sunshine, lo! where from every shady nook appear the white-sailed pinnaces; for on merry Windermere—you must know—every breezy hour has its own Regatta.

But intending to be useful, we are becoming ornamental: of us it must not be said, that

"Pure description holds the place of sense,"—

therefore, let us be simple but not silly, as plain as is possible without being prosy, as instructive as is consistent with being entertaining, a cheerful companion and a trusty guide.

We shall suppose that you have left Kendal, and are on your way to Bowness. Forget, as much as may be, all worldly cares and anxieties, and let your hearts be open and free to all genial impulses about to be breathed into them from the beautiful and sublime in nature. There is no need of that foolish state of feeling called enthusiasm. You have but to be happy; and by and by your happiness will grow into delight. The blue mountains already set your imaginations at work; among those clouds and mists you fancy many a magnificent precipice—and in the valleys that sleep below you image to yourselves the scenery of rivers and lakes. The landscape immediately around gradually grows more and more picturesque and romantic; and you feel that you are on the very borders of Fairy-Land. The first smile of Windermere salutes your impatient eyes, and sinks silently into your heart. You know not how beautiful it may be—nor yet in what the beauty consists; but your finest sensibilities to nature are touched—and a tinge of poetry, as from a rainbow, overspreads that cluster of

islands that seems to woo you to their still retreats. And now

“Wooded Winandermere, the river-lake,”

with all its bays and promontories, lies in the morning light serene as a Sabbath, and cheerful as a Holyday; and you feel that there is loveliness on this earth more exquisite and perfect than ever visited your slumbers even in the glimpses of a dream. The first sight of such a scene will be unforgotten to your dying day—for such passive impressions are deeper than we can explain—our whole spiritual being is suddenly awakened to receive them—and associations, swift as light, are gathered into one Emotion of Beauty which shall be imperishable, and which, often as memory recalls that moment, grows into genius, and vents itself in appropriate expressions, each in itself a picture. Thus may one moment minister to years; and the life-wearied heart of old age by one delightful remembrance be restored to primal joy—the glory of the past brought beamingly upon the faded present—and the world that is obscurely passing away from our eyes re-illuminated with the visions of its early morn. The shows of nature are indeed evanescent, but their spiritual influences are immortal; and from that grove now glowing in the sunlight may your heart derive a delight that shall utterly perish but in the grave.

But now you are in the White Lion, and our advice to you—perhaps unnecessary—is immediately to order breakfast. There are many parlours—some, with a charming prospect and some without any prospect at all; but remember that there are other people in the world besides yourselves—and therefore, into whatever parlour you may be shown by a pretty maid, be contented, and lose no time in addressing yourselves to your repast. That over, be in no hurry to get on the Lake. Perhaps all the boats are engaged—and Billy Balmer is at the Waterhead. So stroll into the churchyard, and take a glance over the graves. Close to the oriel-window of the church is one tomb over which one might meditate half an autumnal day. Enter the church, and you will feel the beauty of these fine lines in the Excursion—

“Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately cross’d
Like leafless underboughs, ’mid some thick grove,
All wither’d by the depth of shade above!”

Go down to the low terrace-walk along the Bay. The Bay is in itself a Lake, at all times cheerful with its scattered fleet, at anchor or under weigh—its villas and cottages, each rejoicing in its garden or orchard—its meadows mellowing to the reedy margin of the pellucid water—its heath-covered boat-houses—its own portion of the Isle called Beautiful—and beyond that silvan haunt, the sweet Furness Fells, with gentle outline undulating in the sky, and among its spiral larches showing, here and there, groves and copses of the old unviolated woods. Yes, Bowness-Bay is in itself a Lake; but how finely does it blend away, through its screens of oak and sycamore-trees, into a larger Lake—another, yet the same—on whose blue bosom you see

bearing down to windward—for the morning breeze is born—many a tiny sail. It has the appearance of a race. Yes—it is a race; and the Liverpoolian, as of yore, is eating them all out of the wind, and without another tack will make her anchorage. But hark—Music! ’Tis the Bowness Band playing “See the conquering Hero comes!”—and our old friend has carried away the gold cup from all competitors.

Now turn your faces up the hill above the village school. That green mount is what is called a—Station. The villagers are admiring a grove of parasols, while you—the party—are admiring the village—with its irregular roofs white, blue, gray, green, brown, and black walls—fruit-laden trees so yellow—its central church-tower—and environing groves variously burnished by autumn. Saw ye ever banks and braes and knolls so beautifully bedropt with human dwellings? There is no solitude about Windermere. Shame on human nature were Paradise uninhabited! Here, in amicable neighbourhood, are halls and huts—here rises through groves the dome of the rich man’s mansion—and there the low roof of the poor man’s cottage beneath its one single sycamore! Here are hundreds of small properties hereditary in the same families for hundreds of years—and never, never, O Westmoreland! may thy race of *statesmen* be extinct—nor the virtues that ennoble their humble households! See, suddenly brought forth by sunshine from among the old woods—and then sinking away into her usual unobtrusive serenity—the lake-loving Rayrig, almost level, so it seems, with the water, yet smiling over her own quiet bay from the grove-shelter of her pastoral mound. Within her walls may peace ever dwell with piety—and the light of science long blend with the lustre of the domestic hearth. Thence to Calgarth is all one forest—yet glade-broken, and enlivened by open uplands; so that the roamer, while he expects a night of umbrage, often finds himself in the open day, beneath the bright blue bow of heaven haply without a cloud. The eye travels delighted over the multitudinous tree-tops—often dense as one single tree—till it rests, in sublime satisfaction, on the far-off mountains, that lose not a woody character till the tree-sprinkled pastures roughen into rocks—and rocks tower into precipices where the falcons breed. But the lake will not suffer the eye long to wander among the distant glooms. She wins us wholly to herself—and restlessly and passionately for a while, but calmly and affectionately at last, the heart embraces all her beauty, and wishes that the vision might endure for ever, and that here our tents were pitched—to be struck no more during our earthly pilgrimage. Imagination lapses into a thousand moods. Oh for a fairy pinnacle to glide and float for aye over those golden waves! A hermit-cell on sweet Lady-Holm! A silvan shieling on Loughrig side! A nest in that nameless dell, which sees but one small slip of heaven, and longs at night for the reascending visit of its few loving stars! A dwelling open to all the skyey influence on the mountain-brow, the darling of the rising or the setting sun, and often seen by

eyes in the lower world glittering through the rainbow!

All this seems a very imperfect picture indeed, or panorama of Windermere, from the hill behind the school-house in the village of Bowness. So, to put a stop to such nonsense, let us descend to the White Lion—and inquire about Billy Balmer. Honest Billy has arrived from Waterhead—seems tolerably steady—Mr. Ullock's boats may be trusted—so let us take a voyage of discovery on the Lake. Let those who have reason to think that they have been born to die a different death from drowning, hoist a sail. We to-day shall feather an oar. Billy takes the stroke—Mr. William Garnet's at the helm—and “row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Lowlands,” is the choral song that accompanies the Naiad out of the bay, and round the north end of the Isle called Beautiful, under the wave-darkening umbrage of that ancient oak. And now we are in the lovely straits between that Island and the mainland of Furness Fells. The village has disappeared, but not melted away; for hark! the Church-tower tolls ten—and see the sun is high in heaven. High, but not hot—for the first September frosts chilled the rosy fingers of the morn as she bathed them in the dews, and the air is cool as a cucumber. Cool but bland—and as clear and transparent as a fine eye lighted up by a good conscience. There were breezes in Bowness Bay—but here there are none—or, if there be, they but whisper aloft in the tree-tops, and ruffle not the water, which is calm as Louisa's breast. The small isles here are but few in number—yet the best arithmetician of the party cannot count them—in confusion so rich and rare do they blend their shadows with those of the groves on the Isle called Beautiful, and on the Furness Fells. A tide, imperceptible to the eye, drifts us on among and above those beautiful reflections—that downward world of hanging dreams! and ever and anon we beckon unto Billy gently to dip his oar, that we may see a world destroyed and recreated in one moment of time. Yes, Billy! thou art a poet—and canst work more wonders with thin oar than could he with his pen who painted “heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb,” wandering by herself in Fairy-Land. How is it, pray, that our souls are satiated with such beauty as this? Is it because 'tis unsubstantial all—senseless, though fair—and in its evanescence unsuited to the sympathies that yearn for the permanencies of breathing life? Dreams are delightful only as delusions within the delusion of this our mortal waking existence—one touch of what we call reality dissolves them all; blissful though they may have been, we care not when the bubble bursts—nay, we are glad again to return to our own natural world, care-haunted though in its happiest moods it be—glad as if we had escaped from glamour; and, oh! beyond expression sweet it is once more to drink the light of living eyes—the music of living lips—after that preternatural hush that steeps the shadowy realms of the imagination, whether stretching along a sunset-heaven, or the mystical imagery of earth and sky floating in the lustre of lake or sea.

Therefore “row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Lowlands;” and as rowing is a thirsty exercise, let us land at the Ferry, and each man refresh himself with a horn of ale.

There is not a prettier place on all Windermere than the Ferry-House, or one better adapted for a honey-moon. You can hand your bride into a boat almost out of the parlour window, and be off among the islands in a moment, or into nook or bay where no prying eye, even through telescope, (a most unwarrantable instrument,) can overlook your happiness; or you can secrete yourselves, like buck and doe, among the lady-fern on Furness Fells, where not a sunbeam can intrude on your sacred privacy, and where you may melt down hours to moments, in chaste connubial bliss, brightening futurity with plans of domestic enjoyment, like long lines of lustre streaming across the lake. But at present, let us visit the fort-looking building among the cliffs called The Station, and see how Windermere looks as we front the east. Why, you would not know it to be the same lake. The Isle called Beautiful, which heretofore had scarcely seemed an isle, appearing to belong to one or other shore of the mainland, from this point of view is an isle indeed, loading the lake with a weight of beauty, and giving it an ineffable character of richness which nowhere else does it possess; while the other lesser isles, dropt “in nature's careless haste” between it and the Furness Fells, connect it still with those lovely shores from which it floats a short way apart, without being disunited—one spirit blending the whole together within the compass of a fledgling's flight. Beyond these

“Sister isles, that smile
Together like a happy family
Of beauty and of love,”

the eye meets the Rayrig-woods, with but a gleam of water between, only visible in sunshine, and is gently conducted by them up the hills of Applethwaite, diversified with cultivated enclosures, “all green as emerald” to their very summits, with all their pastoral and arable grounds besprinkled with stately single trees, copses, or groves. On the nearer side of these hills is seen, stretching far off to other lofty regions—Hill-bell and High Street conspicuous over the rest—the long vale of Troutbeck, with its picturesque cottages, in “numbers without number numberless,” and all its sable pines and sycamores—on the further side, that most silvan of all silvan mountains, where lately the Hemans warbled her native wood-notes wild in her poetic bower, fitly called Dovenest, and beyond, Kirkstone Fells and Rydal Head, magnificent giants looking westward to the Langdale Pikes, (here unseen,)

“The last that parley with the setting sun.”

Immediately in front, the hills are low and lovely, sloping with gentle undulations down to the lake, here grove-girdled along all its shores. The elm-grove that overshadows the Parsonage is especially conspicuous—stately and solemn in a green old age—and though now silent, in spring and early summer clamorous with rooks, in love or alarm, an ancient family, and not to be expelled from their hereditary seats. Following the line of shore to the

right, and turning your eyes unwillingly away from the bright and breezy Belfield, they fall on the elegant architecture of Storr's-hall, gleaming from a glade in the thick woods, and still looking southward they see a serene series of the same forest scenery, along the heights of Gillhead and Gummer's-How, till Windermere is lost, apparently narrowed into a river, beyond Townhead and Fellfoot, where the prospect is closed by a beaconed eminence clothed with shadowy trees to the very base of the Tower. The points and promontories jutting into the lake from these and the opposite shores—which are of an humbler, though not tame character—are all placed most felicitously; and as the lights and shadows keep shifting on the water, assume endless varieties of relative position to the eye, so that often during one short hour you might think you had been gazing on Windermere with a kaleidoscopic eye, that had seemed to create the beauty which in good truth is floating there for ever on the bosom of nature.

That description, perhaps, is not so very much amiss; but should you think otherwise, be so good as to give us a better: meanwhile let us descend from The Station—and its stained windows—stained into setting sunlight—frost and snow—the purpling autumn—and the first faint vernal green—and re-embark at the Ferry-House pier. Berkshire Island is fair—but we have always looked at it with an evil eye since unable to weather it in our old schooner, one day when the Victory, on the same tack, shot by us to windward like a salmon. But now we are half way between Storr's Point and Rawlinson's Nab—so, my dear Garnet, down with the helm and let us put about (who is that catching crabs?) for a fine front view of the Grecian edifice. It does honour to the genius of Gaddy—and say what people choose of a classic clime, the light of a Westmoreland sky falls beautifully on that marble-like stone, which, whether the heavens be in gloom or glory, "shines well where it stands," and flings across the lake a majestic shadow. Methought there passed along the lawn the image of one now in his tomb! The memory of that bright day returns, when Windermere glittered with all her sails in honour of the great Northern Minstrel, and of him the Eloquent, whose lips are now mute in the dust. Methinks we see his smile benign—that we hear his voice silver-sweet!

"But away with melancholy,
Nor doleful changes ring!"—

as such thoughts came like shadows, like shadows let them depart—and spite of that which happeneth to all men—"this one day we give to merriment." Pull, Billy, pull—or we will turn you round—and in that case there is no refreshment nearer than Newby-bridge. The Naiad feels the invigorated impulse—and her cut-water murmurs to the tune of six knots through the tiny cataract foaming round her bows. The woods are all running down the lake,—and at that rate, by two post meridiem will be in the sea.

Commend us—on a tour—to lunch and dinner in one. 'Tis a saving both of time and money—and of all the dinner-lunches that ever

were set upon a sublunary table, the *facile principes* are the dinner-lunches you may devour in the White Lion, Bowness. Take a walk—and a seat on the green that overlooks the village, almost on a level with the lead-roof of the venerable church—while Hebe is laying the cloth for a repast fit for Jove, Juno, and the other heathen gods and goddesses; and if you must have politics—why, call for the Standard or Sun, (Heavens! there is that hawk already at the Times,) and devote a few hurried and hungry minutes to the French Revolution. Why, the Green of all Greens—often traced by us of yore beneath the midnight moonlight, till a path was worn along the edge of the low wall, still called "North's Walk"—is absolutely converted into a reading-room, and our laking party into a political club. There is Louisa with the Leeds Intelligencer—and Matilda with the Morning Herald—and Harriet with that York paper worth them all put together—for it tells of Priam, and the Cardinal, and St. Nicholas—but, hark! a soft footstep! And then a soft voice—no dialect or accent pleasanter than the Westmoreland—whispers that the dinner-lunch is on the table—and no leading article like a cold round of beef, or a veal-pie. Let the Parisians settle their Constitution as they will—meanwhile let us strengthen ours; and after a single glass of Madeira—and a horn of home-brewed—let us off on foot—on horseback—in gig—car and chariot—to Troutbeck.

It is about a Scottish mile, we should think, from Bowness to Cook's House—along the turnpike road—half the distance lying embowered in the Rayrig woods—and half open to lake, cloud, and sky. It is pleasant to lose sight now and then of the lake along whose banks you are travelling, especially if during separation you become a Druid. The water woos you at your return with her bluest smile, and her whitest murmur. Some of the finest trees in all the Rayrig woods have had the good sense to grow by the roadside, where they can see all that is passing, and make their own observations on us deciduous plants. Few of them seem to be very old—not much older than Christopher North—and, like him, they wear well, trunk sound to the core, arms with a long sweep, and head in fine proportions of cerebral development, fortified against all storms—perfect pictures of oaks in their prime. You may see one—without looking for it—near a farm-house called Miller-ground—himself a grove. His trunk is clothed in a tunic of moss, which shows the ancient Sylvan to great advantage—and it would be no easy matter to give him a fall. Should you wish to see Windermere in all her glory, you have but to enter a gate a few yards on this side of his shade, and ascend an eminence called by us Greenbank—but you had as well leave your red mantle in the carriage, for an enormous white, long-horned Lancashire bull has for some years established his head-quarters not far off, and you would not wish your wife to become a widow, with six fatherless children. But the royal road of poetry is often the most splendid—and by keeping the turnpike, you soon find yourself on a terrace to which there

was nothing to compare in the hanging gardens of Babylon. There is the widest breadth of water—the richest foreground of wood—and the most magnificent background of mountains—not only in Westmoreland but—believe us—in all the world. That blue roof is Calgarth—and no traveller ever pauses on this brow without giving it a blessing—for the sake of the illustrious dead; for there long dwelt in the body Richard Watson, the Defender of the Faith, and there within the shadow of his memory still dwell those dearest on earth to his beatified spirit. So pass along in high and solemn thought, till you lose sight of Calgarth in the lone road that leads by St. Catharines, and then relapse into pleasant fancies and picturesque dreams. This is the best way by far of approaching Troutbeck. No ups and downs in this life were ever more enlivening—not even the ups and downs of a bird learning to fly. Sheep-fences, six feet high, are admirable contrivances for shutting out scenery; and by shutting out much scenery, why, you confer an unappreciable value on the little that remains visible, and feel as if you could hug it to your heart. But sometimes one does feel tempted to shove down a few roods of intercepting stone-wall higher than the horse-hair on a cuirassier's casque—though sheep should eat the suckers and scions, protected as they there shoot, at the price of the concealment of the picturesque and the poetical from beauty-searching eyes. That is a long lane, it is said, which has never a turning; so this must be a short one, which has a hundred. You have turned your back on Windermere—and our advice to you is, to keep your face to the mountains. Troutbeck is a jewel—a diamond of a stream—but Bobbin Mills have exhausted some of the most lustrous pools, changing them into shallows, where the minnows rove. Deep dells are his delight—and he loves the rugged scaurs that intrench his wooded banks—and the fantastic rocks that tower-like hang at intervals over his winding course, and seem sometimes to block it up; but the miner works his way out beneath galleries and arches in the living stone—sometimes silent—sometimes singing—and sometimes roaring like thunder—till subsiding into a placid spirit, ere he reaches the wooden bridge in the bonny holms of Calgarth, he glides graceful as the swan that sometimes sees his image in his breast, and through alder and willow banks murmurs away his life in the Lake.

Yes—that is Troutbeck Chapel—one of the smallest—and to our eyes the very simplest—of all the chapels among the hills. Yet will it be remembered when more pretending edifices are forgotten—just like some mild, sensible, but perhaps somewhat too silent person, whose acquaintanceship—nay friendship—we feel a wish to cultivate we scarce know why, except that he is mild, sensible, and silent; whereas we would not be civil to the *brusque*, upsetting, and loquacious puppy at his elbow, whose information is as various as it is profound, were one word or look of courtesy to save him from the flames. For heaven's sake, Lonsia, don't sketch Troutbeck Chapel. There is nothing but a square tower—a horizontal roof

—and some perpendicular walls. The outlines of the mountains here have no specific character. That bridge is but a poor feature—and the stream here very common-place. Put them not on paper. Yet alive—is not the secluded scene felt to be most beautiful? It has a soul. The pure spirit of the pastoral age is breathing here—in this utter noislessness there is the oblivion of all turmoil; and as the bleating of flocks comes on the ear, along the fine air, from the green pastures of the Kentmere range of soft undulating hills, the stilled heart whispers to itself, "this is peace!"

The worst of it is, that of all people that on earth do dwell, your Troutbeck *statesmen*, we have heard, are the most litigious—the most quarrelsome about straws. Not a footpath in all the parish that has not cost many pounds in lawsuits. The most insignificant stile is referred to a full bench of magistrates. That gate was carried to the Quarter Sessions. No branch of a tree can shoot six inches over a march-wall without being indicted for a trespass. And should a frost-loosened stone tumble from some *skeers* down upon a neighbour's field, he will be served with a notice to quit before next morning. Many of the small properties hereabouts have been mortgaged over head and ears mainly to fee attorneys. Yet the last hoop of apples will go the same road—and the statesman, driven at last from his paternal fields, will sue for something or another *in forma pauperis*, were it but the worthless wood and second-hand nails that may be destined for his coffin. This is a pretty picture of pastoral life—but we must take pastoral life as we find it. Nor have we any doubt that things were every whit as bad in the time of the Patriarchs—else—whence the satirical sneer, "sham Abraham?" Yonder is the Village straggling away up along the hillside, till the furthest house seems a rock fallen with trees from the mountain. The cottages stand for the most part in clusters of twos or threes—with here and there what in Scotland we should call a *clachan*—many a sma' toun within the ae lang toun; but where in all braid Scotland is a mile-long scattered congregation of rural dwellings, all dropt down where the Painter and the Poet would have wished to plant them, on knolls and in dells, and on banks and braes, and below tree-crested rocks, and all bound together in picturesque confusion by old groves of ash, oak, and sycamore, and by flower-gardens and fruit-orchards, rich as those of the Hesperides?

If you have no objections—our pretty dears—we shall return to Bowness by Lowood. Let us form a straggling line of march—so that we may one and all indulge in our own silent fancies—and let not a word be spoken, virgins—under the penalty of two kisses for one syllable—till we crown the height above Briary-Close. Why, there it is already—and we hear our musical friend's voice—accompanied guitar. From the front of his cottage, the head and shoulders of Windermere are seen in their most majestic shape—and from nowhere else is the long-withdrawing Langdale so magnificently closed by mountains. There at sunset hangs "Cloud-land, gorgeous land," by gazing

on which for an hour we shall all become poets and poetesses. Who said that Windermere was too narrow? The same critic who thinks the full harvest moon too round—and despises the twinkling of the evening star. It is all the way down—from head to foot—from the Brathay to the Leven—of the proper breadth precisely—to a quarter of an inch. Were the reeds in Poolwyke Bay—on which the birds love to balance themselves—at low or high water, to be visible longer or shorter than what they have always been in the habit of being on such occasions since first we brushed them with an oar, when landing in our skiff from the Endeavour, the beauty of the whole of Windermere would be impaired—so exquisitely adapted is that pellucid gleam to the lips of its silvan shores. True, there are flaws in the diamond—but only when the squalls come; and as the blackness sweeps by, that diamond of the first water is again sky-bright and sky-blue as an angel's eyes. Lowood Bay—we are now embarked in Mr. Jackson's prettiest pinnace—when the sun is westerling—which it now is—surpasses all other bays in fresh-water mediterraneans. Eve loves to see her pensive face reflected in that serenest mirror. To flatter such a divinity is impossible—but sure she never wears a smile so divine as when adjusting her dusky tresses in that truest of all glasses, set in the richest of all frames. Pleased she retires—with a wavering motion—and casting “many a longing, lingering look behind,” fades indistinctly away among the Brathay woods; while Night, her eldest sister, or rather her younger—we really know not which—takes her place at the darkening mirror, till it glitters with her crescent-moon-coronet, wreathed perhaps with a white cloud, and just over the silver bow the lustre of one large yellow star.

As none of the party complain of hunger, let us crack among us a single bottle of our worthy host's choice old Madeira—and then haste in the barouche (ha! here it is) to Bowness. It is right now to laugh—and sing—and recite poetry—and talk all manner of nonsense. Didn't ye hear something crack? Can it be a spring—or merely the axeltree? Our clerical friend from Chester assures us 'twas but a string of his guitar—so no more shrieking—and after coffee we shall have

“Rise up, rise up, Xarifa, lay your golden cushion down!” And then we two, my dear sir, must have a contest at chess—at which, if you beat us, we shall leave our bed at midnight, and murder you in your sleep. “But where,” murmurs Matilda, “are we going?” To Oresthead, love—and Elleray—for you must see a sight these sweet eyes of thine never saw before—
SUNSET.

We have often wondered if there be in the world one woman indisputably and undeniably the most beautiful of all women—or if, indeed, our first mother were “the loveliest of her daughters, Eve.” What human female beauty is, all men feel—but few men know—and none can tell—further than that it is perfect spiritual health, breathingly imbodied in perfect corporeal flesh and blood, according to certain heaven-framed adaptions of form and hue, yet by a

familiar yet inscrutable mystery, to our senses and our souls express sanctity and purity of the immortal essence enshrined within, by aid of all associated perceptions and emotions that the heart and the imagination can agglomerate round them, as instantly and as unhesitatingly as the faculties of thought and feeling can agglomerate round a lily or a rose, for example, the perceptions and emotions that make them—by divine right of inalienable beauty—the Royal Families of Flowers. This definition—or description rather—of human female beauty, may appear to some, as indeed it appears to us—something vague; but all profound truths—out of the exact sciences—are something vague; and it is manifestly the design of a benign and gracious Providence, that they should be so till the end of time—till mortality puts on immortality—and earth is heaven. Vagueness, therefore, is no fault in philosophy—any more than in the dawn of morning, or the gloaming of eve. Enough, if each clause of the sentence that seeks to elucidate a confessed mystery, has a meaning harmonious with all the meanings in all the other clauses—and that the effect of the whole taken together is musical—and a tune. Then it is Truth. For all Falsehood is dissonant—and verity is concent. It is our faith, that the souls of some women are angelic—or nearly so—by nature and the Christian religion; and that the faces and persons of some women are angelic—or nearly so—whose souls, nevertheless, are seen to be far otherwise—and, on that discovery, beauty fades or dies. But may not soul and body—spirit and matter—meet in perfect union at birth; and grow together into a creature, though of spiritual mould, comparable with Eve before the Fall? Such a creature—such creatures—may have been; but the question is—did you ever see one? We almost think that we have—but many long years ago;

“She is dedde,
Gone to her death-bedde
All under the willow tree.”

And it may be that her image in the moonlight of memory and imagination, may be more perfectly beautiful than she herself ever was, when

“Ugrew that living flower beneath our eye.”

Yes—'tis thus that we form to ourselves—incommunicably within our souls—what we choose to call Ideal Beauty—that is, a life-in-death image or Eidolon of a Being whose voice was once heard, and whose footsteps once wandered among the flowers of this earth. But it is a mistake to believe that such beauty as this can visit the soul only after the original in which it once breathed is no more. For as it can only be seen by profoundest passion—and the profoundest are the passions of Love, and Pity, and Grief—then why may not each and all of these passions—when we consider the constitution of this world and this life—be awakened in their utmost height and depth by the sight of living beauty, as well as by the memory of the dead? To do so is surely within “the reachings of our souls,”—and if so, then may the virgin beauty of his daughter, praying with folded hands and heavenward face when leaning in health on her father's

knees, transcend even the ideal beauty which shall afterwards visit his slumbers nightly, long years after he has laid her head in the grave. If by ideal beauty, you mean a beauty beyond whatever breathed, and moved, and had its being on earth—then we suspect that not even “that inner eye which is the bliss of solitude” ever beheld it: but if you merely mean by ideal beauty, that which is composed of ideas, and of the feelings attached by nature to ideas, then, begging your pardon, my good sir, all beauty whatever is ideal—and you had better begin to study metaphysics.

But what we were wishing to say is this—that whatever may be the truth with regard to human female beauty—Windermere, seen by sunset from the spot where we now stand, Elleray, is at this moment the most beautiful scene on this earth. The reasons why it must be so are multitudinous. Not only can the eye take in, but the imagination, in its awakened power, can master all the component elements of the spectacle—and while it adequately discerns and sufficiently feels the influence of each, is alive throughout all its essence to the divine agency of the whole. The charm lies in its entirety—its unity, which is so perfect—so seemeth it to our eyes—that ’tis in itself a complete world—of which not a line could be altered without disturbing the spirit of beauty that lies recumbent there, wherever the earth meets the sky. There is nothing here fragmentary; and had a poet been born, and bred here all his days, nor known aught of fair or grand beyond this liquid vale, yet had he sung truly and profoundly of the shows of nature. No rude and shapeless masses of mountains—such as too often in our own dear Scotland encumber the earth with dreary desolation—with gloom without grandeur—and magnitude without magnificence. But almost in orderly array, and irregular just up to the point of the picturesque, where poetry is not needed for the fancy’s pleasure, stand the Race of Giants—mist-veiled transparently—or crowned with clouds slowly settling of their own accord into all the forms that Beauty loves, when with her sister-spirit Peace she descends at eve from highest heaven to sleep among the shades of earth.

Sweet would be the hush of lake, woods, and skies, were it not so solemn! The silence is that of a temple, and, as we face the west, irresistibly are we led to adore. The mighty sun occupies with his flaming retinue all the region. Mighty yet mild—for from his disc, awhile insufferably bright, is effused now a gentle crimson light, that dyes all the west in one uniform glory, save where yet round the cloud edges lingers the purple, the green, and the yellow lustre, unwilling to forsake the violet beds of the sky, changing, while we gaze, into heavenly roses; till that prevailing crimson colour at last gains entire possession of the heavens, and all the previous splendour gives way to one whose paramount purity, lustrous as fire, is in its steadfast beauty sublime. And, lo! the lake has received that sunset into its bosom. It, too, softly burns with a crimson glow—and, as sinks the sun below the mountains Windermere, gorgeous in her array as

the western sky, keeps fading away as it fades, till at last all the ineffable splendour expires, and the spirit that has been lost to this world in the transcendent vision, or has been seeing all things appertaining to this world in visionary symbols, returns from that celestial sojourn, and knows that its lot is, henceforth as heretofore, to walk weariedly perhaps, and wo-begone, over the no longer divine but disenchanted earth!

It is very kind in the moon and stars—just like them—to rise so soon after sunset. The heart sinks at the sight of the sky, when a characterless night succeeds such a blaze of light—like dull reality dashing the last vestiges of the brightest of dreams. When the moon is “hid in her vacant interlunar cave,” and not a star can “burst its cerements,” imagination in the dim blank droops her wings—our thoughts become of the earth earthly—and poetry seems a pastime fit but for fools and children. But how different our mood, when

“Glow the firmament with living sapphires,” and Diana, who has ascended high in heaven, without our having once observed the divinity, bends her silver bow among the rejoicing stars, while the lake, like another sky, seems to contain its own luminaries, a different division of the constellated night! ’Tis merry Windermere no more. Yet we must not call her melancholy—though somewhat sad she seems, and pensive, as if the stillness of universal nature did touch her heart. How serene all the lights—how peaceful all the shadows! Steadfast alike—as if they would brood for ever—yet transient as all loveliness—and at the mercy of every cloud. In some places the lake has disappeared—in others, the moonlight is almost like sunshine—only silver instead of gold. Here spots of quiet light—there lines of trembling lustre—and there a flood of radiance chequered by the images of trees. Lo! the Isle called Beautiful has now gathered upon its central grove all the radiance issuing from that celestial Urn; and almost in another moment it seems blended with the dim mass of mainland, and blackness enshrouds the woods. Still as seems the night to unobservant eyes, it is fluctuating in its expression as the face of a sleeper—overspread with pleasant but disturbing dreams. Never for any two successive moments is the aspect of the night the same,—each smile has its own meaning, its own character; and Light is felt to be like Music, to have a melody and a harmony of its own—so mysteriously allied are the powers and provinces of eye and ear, and by such a kindred and congenial agency do they administer to the workings of the spirit.

Well, that is very extraordinary—Rain—rain—rain! All the eyes of heaven were bright as bright might be—the sky was blue as violets—that braided whiteness, that here and there floated like a veil on the brow of night, was all that recalled the memory of clouds—and as for the moon, no faintest halo yellowed round her orb, that seemed indeed “one perfect chrysolite;”—yet while all the winds seemed laid asleep till morn, and beauty to have chained all the elements into peace—overcast in a moment is the firmament—an

evanishing has left it blank as mist—there is a fast, thick, pattering on the woods—yes—rain—rain—rain—and ere we reach Bowness, the party will be wet through to their skins. Nay—matters are getting still more serious—for there was lightning—yea, lightning! Ten seconds! and hark, very respectable thunder! With all our wisdom, we have not been weather-wise—or we should have known, when we saw it, an electrical sunset. Only look now towards the West. There floats Noah's Ark—a magnificent spectacle; and now for the Flood. That far-off sullen sound proclaims cataracts. And what may mean that sighing and moaning and muttering up among the cliffs! See—see how the sheet lightning

shows the long lake-shore all tumbling with foamy breakers. A strong wind is there—but here there is not a breath. But the woods across the lake are bowing their heads to the blast. Windermere is in a tumult—the storm comes flying on wings all abroad—and now we are in the very heart of the hurricane. See, in Bowness is hurrying many a light—for the people fear we may be on the lake; and faithful Billy, depend on't, is launching his life-boat to go to our assistance. Well, this is an adventure.—But soft—what ails our Argand Lamp! Our Study is in such darkness that we cannot see our paper—in the midst of a thunder-storm we conclude, and to bed by a flaff of lightning.

THE MOORS.

PROLOGUE.

ONCE we knew the Highlands absolutely too well—not a nook that was not as familiar to us as our brown study. We had not to complain of the lochs, glens, woods, and mountains alone, for having so fastened themselves upon us on a great scale that we found it impossible to shake them off; but the hardship in our case was, that all the subordinate parts of the scenery, many of them dull and dreary enough, and some of them intolerably tedious, had taken it upon themselves so to thrust their intimacy upon us, in all winds and weathers, that without giving them the cut direct there was no way of escaping from the burden of their friendship. To courteous and humane Christians, such as we have always been both by name and nature as far back as we can recollect, it is painful to cut even an impudent stone, or an upsetting tree that may cross our path uncalled for, or obtrude itself on our privacy when we wish to be alone in our meditations. Yet, we confess, they used sometimes sorely to try our temper. It is all very well for you, our good sir, to say in excuse for them that such objects are inanimate. So much the worse. Were they animate, like yourself, they might be reasoned with on the impropriety of interrupting the stream of any man's soliloquies. But being not merely inanimate but irrational, objects of that class know not to keep their own place, which indeed, it may be said in reply, is kept for them by nature. But that Mistress of the Ceremonies, though enjoying a fine green old age, cannot be expected to be equally attentive to the proceedings of all the objects under her control. Accordingly, often when she is not looking, what more common than for a huge halking fellow of a rock, with an absurd tuft of trees on his head, who has observed you lying half-asleep on the greensward, to hang eavesdropping, as it were, over your most secret thoughts, which he whispers to the winds, and they to all the clouds! Or for some gro-

tesque and fantastic ash, with a crooked back, and arms disproportionately long, like a giant in extreme old age dwindling into a dwarf, to jut out from the hole in the wall, and should your leaden eye chance at the time to love the ground, to put his mossy fist right in your philosophical countenance! In short, it is very possible to know a country so thoroughly well, outside and in, from mountain to molehill, that you get mutually tired of one another's company, and are ready to vent your quarrel in reciprocal imprecations.

So was it once with us and the Highlands. That "too much familiarity breeds contempt" we learned many a long year ago, when learning to write large text; and passages in our life have been a running commentary on the theme then set us by that incomparable calligraphist, Butterworth. All "the old familiar faces" occasionally come in for a portion of that feeling; and on that account, we are glad that we saw, but for one day and one night, Charles Lamb's. Therefore, some dozen years ago we gave up the Highlands, not wishing to quarrel with them, and confined our tender assiduities to the Lowlands, while, like two great Flats as we were, we kept staring away at each other, with our lives on the same level. All the consequences that might naturally have been expected have ensued; and we are now as heartily sick of the Lowlands, and they of us. What can we do but return to our First Love?

Allow us to offer another view of the subject. There is not about Old Age one blessing more deserving gratitude to Heaven, than the gradual bedimming of memory brought on by years. In youth, all things, internal and external, are unforgettable, and by the perpetual presence of passion oppress the soul. The eye of a woman haunts the victim on whom it may have given a glance, till he leaps perhaps out of a four-story window. A beautiful lake, or a sublime mountain, drives a young poet as mad as a March hare. He loses himself in an interminable forest louring all round

the horizon of a garret six feet square. It matters not to him whether his eyes be open or shut. He is at the mercy of all Life and all Nature, and not for one hour can he escape from their persecutions. His soul is the slave of the Seven Senses, and each is a tyrant with instruments of torture, to whom and to which Phalaris, with his brazen bull, was a pointless joke. But in old age "the heart of a man is oppressed with care" no longer; the Seven Tyrants have lost their sceptres, and are dethroned; and the grayheaded gentleman feels that his soul has "set up its rest." His eyes are dazzled no more with insufferable light—no more his ears tingle with music too exquisite to be borne—no more his touch is transport. The scents of nature, stealing from the balmy mouths of lilies and roses, are deadened in his nostrils. He is above and beyond the reach of all the long arms of many-handed misery, as he is out of the convulsive clutch of bliss. And is not this the state of best happiness for mortal man? Tranquillity! The peaceful air that we breathe as we are westerling towards the sunset-regions of our Being, and feel that we are about to drop down for ever out of sight behind the Sacred Mountains.

All this may be very fine, but cannot be said to help us far on with our Prologue. Let us try it again. Old men, we remarked, ought to be thankful to Heaven for their dim memories. Never do we feel that more profoundly than when dreaming about the Highlands. All is confusion. Nothing distinctly do we remember—not even the names of lochs and mountains. Where is Ben Cru—Cru—Cru—what's-his-name? Ay—ay—Cruachan. At this blessed moment we see his cloud-capped head—but we have clean forgotten the silver sound of the name of the country he encumbers. Ross-shire! Nay, that won't do—he never was at Tair. We are assured by Dr. Reid's, Dr. Beattie's, and Dugald Stewart's great Instinctive First Principle Belief, that oftener than once, or ten times either, have we been in a day-long hollow among precipices dear to eagles, called Glen-Etive. But where begins or where ends that "severe sojourn," is now to us a mystery—though we hear the sound of the sea and the dashing of cataracts. Yet though all is thus dim in our memory, would you believe it that nothing is utterly lost? No, not even the thoughts that soared like eagles vanishing in the light—or that dived like ravens into the gloom. They all re-appear—those from the Empyrean—these from Hades—reminding us of the good or the evil borne in other days, within the spiritual regions of our boundless being. The world of eye and ear is not in reality narrowed because it glimmers; ever and anon as years advance, a light direct from heaven dissipates the gloom, and bright and glorious as of yore the landscape laughs to the sea, the sea to heaven, and heaven back again to the gazing spirit that leaps forward to the hailing light with something of the same divine passion that gave wings to our youth.

All this may be still finer, yet cannot be said, any more than the preceding paragraph, much to help us on with our Prologue. To come then, if possible, to the point at once—We are

happy that our dim memory and our dim imagination restore and revive in our mind none but the characteristic features of the scenery of the Highlands, unmixed with baser matter, and all floating magnificently through a spiritual haze, so that the whole region is now more than ever idealized; and in spite of all his present, past, and future prosiness—Christopher North, soon as in thought his feet touch the heather, becomes a poet.

It has long been well known to the whole world that we are a sad egotist—yet our egotism, so far from being a detraction from our attraction, seems to be the very soul of it, making it impossible in nature for any reasonable being to come within its sphere, without being drawn by sweet compulsion to the old wizard's heart. He is so *humane*! Only look at him for a few minutes, and liking becomes love—love becomes veneration. And all this even before he has opened his lips—by the mere power of his ogles and his temples. In his large mild blue eyes is written not only his nature, but miraculously, in German text, his very name, Christopher North. Mrs. Gentle was the first to discover it; though we remember having been asked more than once in our youth, by an alarmed virgin on whom we happened at the time to be looking tender, "If we were aware that there was something preternatural in our eyes?" Christopher is conspicuous in our right eye—North in our left, and when we wish to be incog., we either draw their fringed curtains, or, unlike, keep the tell-tale orbs fixed on the ground. Candour whispers us to confess, that some years ago a child was exhibited at six-pence with WILLIAM WOOD legible in its optics—having been affiliated, by ocular evidence, on a gentleman of that name, who, with his dying breath, disowned the soft impeachment. But in that case nature had written a vile scrawl—in ours her hand is firm, and goes off with a flourish.

Have you ever entered, all alone, the shadows of some dilapidated old burial-place, and in a nook made beautiful by wild-briers and a flowering thorn, beheld the stone image of some long-forgotten worthy lying on his grave? Some knight who perhaps had fought in Palestine—or some holy man, who in the Abbey—now almost gone—had led a long still life of prayer? The moment you knew that you were standing among the dwellings of the dead, how impressive became the ruins! Did not that stone image wax more and more lifelike in its repose? And as you kept your eyes fixed on the features Time had not had the heart to obliterate, seemed not your soul to hear the echoes of the Miserere sung by the brethren?

So looks Christopher—on his couch—in his alcove. He is taking his siesta—and the faint shadows you see coming and going across his face are dreams. 'Tis a pensive dormitory, and hangs undisturbed in its spiritual region as a cloud on the sky of the Longest Day when it falls on the Sabbath.

What think you of our FATHER, alongside of the Pedlar in the *Excursion*? Wordsworth says—

"Amid the gloom,
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elm

Appear'd a roofless hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other! I look'd round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
Him whom I sought; a man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side."

Alas! "stout and hale" are words that could not be applied, without cruel mocking, to our figure. "Recumbent in the shade" unquestionably he is—yet "recumbent" is a clumsy word for such quietude; and, recurring to our former image, we prefer to say, in the words of Wilson—

"Still is he as a frame of stone
That in its stillness lies alone,
With silence breathing from its face,
For ever in some holy place,
Chapel or aisle—on marble laid,
With pale hands on his pale breast spread,
An image humble, meek, and low,
Of one forgotten long ago!"

No "iron-pointed staff lies at his side"—but "Satan's dread," THE CRUTCH! Wordsworth tells us over again that the Pedlar—

"With no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of *relinquish'd* toils,
Upon the cottage-bench repos'd his limbs,
Screen'd from the sun."

On his couch, in his Alcove, Christopher is reposing—not his limbs alone—but his very essence. THE CRUTCH is, indeed, both *de jure* and *de facto* the prized memorial of toils—but, thank Heaven, not *relinquish'd* toils; and then how characteristic of the dear merciless old man—hardly distinguishable among the fringed draperies of his canopy, the dependant and independent KNOUT.

Was the Pedlar absolutely asleep? We shrewdly suspect not—'twas but a doze. "Recumbent in the shade, *as if asleep*"—"Upon that cottage-bench *reposed* his limbs"—induce us to lean to the opinion that he was but on the border of the Land of Nod. Nay, the poet gets more explicit, and with that minute particularity so charming in poetical description, finally informs us that

"Supine the wanderer lay,
His eyes, *as if in drowsiness, half shut*,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face."

It would appear, then, on an impartial consideration of all the circumstances of the case, that the "man of reverend age," though "recumbent" and "supine" upon the "cottage bench," "as if asleep," and "his eyes, as if in drowsiness, half shut," was in a mood between sleeping and waking; and this creed is corroborated by the following assertion—

"He had not heard the sound
Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.
At length I hail'd him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
Had newly scoop'd a running stream."

He rose; and so do We, for probably by this time you may have discovered that we have been describing Ourselves in our siesta or mid-day snooze—as we have been beholding in our mind's eye our venerated and mysterious Double.

We cannot help flattering ourselves—if indeed it be flattery—that though no relative of his, we have a look of the Pedlar—as he is elab-

orately painted by the hand of a great master in the aforesaid Poem.

Him had I mark'd the day before—alone,
And station'd in the public way, with face
Turn'd to the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded to the figure of the man,
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support," &c.

As if it were yesterday, we remember our first interview with the Bard. It was at the Lady's Oak, between Ambleside and Rydal. We were then in the very flower of our age—just sixty; so we need not say the century had then seen but little of this world. The Bard was a mere boy of some six lustres, and had a lyrical ballad look that established his identity at first sight, all unlike the lack-a-daisical. His right hand was within his vest on the region of the heart, and he ceased his crooning as we stood face to face. What a noble countenance! at once austere and gracious—haughty and benign—of a man conscious of his greatness while yet companioning with the humble—an unrecognised power dwelling in the woods. Our figure at that moment so impressed itself on his imagination, that it in time supplanted the image of the real Pedlar, and grew into the *Emeritus of the Three Days*. We were standing in that very attitude—having deposited on the coping of the wall our Kit, since adopted by the British Army, with us at once a library and a ladder.

And again—and even more characteristically—

"Plain was his garb:
Such as might suit a rustic sire, prepared
For Sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have pass'd without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compress'd the freshness of his cheeks
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye, that under brows,
Shaggy and grey, had meanings, which it brought
From years of youth; whilst, like a being made
Of many beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave."

In our intellectual characters we indulge the pleasing hope that there are some striking points of resemblance, on which, however, our modesty will not permit us to dwell—and in our acquirements, more particularly in Plane and Spherical Trigonometry.

"While yet he linger'd in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven.
The silent stars! oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag,
That is the eagle's birthplace," &c.

So it was with us. Give us but a base and a quadrant—and when a student in Jemmy Mil-lar's class, we could have given you the altitude of any steeple in Glasgow or the Gorbals.

Occasionally, too, in a small party of friends, though not proud of the accomplishment, we have been prevailed on, as you may have heard, to delight humanity with a song—"The Flowers of the Forest," "Roy's Wife," "Flee up, flee up, thou bonnie bonnie Cock," or "Auld Langsyne"—just as the Pedlar

"At request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the caire

Of the industrious husbandman diffused
Through a parch'd meadow field in time of
drought."

Our natural disposition, too, is as amiable as
that of the "Vagrant Merchant."

"And surely never did there live on earth
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
And teasing ways of children vex'd not him:
Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
To his fraternal sympathy address'd,
Obtain reluctant hearing."

Who can read the following lines, and not
think of Christopher North?

"Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind he loved them all."

True, that our love of

"The mute fish that glances in the stream,"

is not incompatible with the practice of the
"angler's silent trade," or with the pleasure of
"filling our pannier." The Pedlar, too, we have
reason to know, was like his poet and our-
selves, in that art a craftsman, and for love
beat the molecatcher at busking a batch of
May-dies. We question whether Lascelles
himself were his master at a green dragon.
"The harmless reptile coiling in the sun" we
are not so sure about, having once been bit by
an adder, whom in our simplicity we mistook for
a slow-worm—the very day, by the by, on
which we were poisoned by a dish of toad-
stools, by our own hand gathered for mush-
rooms. But we have long given over chasing
butterflies, and feel, as the Pedlar did, that they
are beautiful creatures, and that 'tis a sin be-
tween finger and thumb to compress their
mealy wings. The household dog we do in-
deed dearly love, though when old Surly looks
suspicious we prudently keep out of the reach
of his chain. As for "the domestic fowl," we
breed scores every spring, solely for the delight
of seeing them at their walks,

"Among the rural villages and farms;"

and though game to the back-bone, they are
allowed to wear the spurs nature gave them—
to crow unclipped, challenging but the echoes;
nor is the sward, like the *sod*, ever reddened
with their heroic blood, for hateful to our ears
the war-song,

"Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!"

'Tis our way, you know, to pass from gay
to grave matter, and often from a jocular to a
serious view of the same subject—it being
natural to us—and having become habitual
too, from our writing occasionally in Black-
wood's Magazine. All the world knows our
admiration of Wordsworth, and admits that
we have done almost as much as Jeffrey or
Taylor to make his poetry popular among the
"educated circles." But we are not a nation
of idolaters, and worship neither graven image
nor man that is born of a woman. We may
seem to have treated the Pedlar with insuffi-
cient respect in that playful parallel between
him and ourselves; but there you are wrong
again, for we desire thereby to do him honour.
We wish now to say a few words on the wis-

dom of making such a personage the chief
character in a Philosophical Poem.

He is described as endowed by nature with
a great intellect, a noble imagination, a pro-
found soul, and a tender heart. It will not be
said that nature keeps these her noblest gifts
for human beings born in this or that condition
of life: she gives them to her favourites—for
so, in the highest sense, they are to whom
such gifts befall; and not unfrequently, in an
obscure place, of one of the FORTUNATI

"The fulgent head
Star-bright appears."

Wordsworth appropriately places the birth of
such a being in an humble dwelling in the
Highlands of Scotland.

"Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of barren ground,
His parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt:
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor."

His childhood was nurtured at home in Chris-
tian love and truth—and acquired other know-
ledge at a winter school; for in summer he
"tended cattle on the hill"—

"That stood
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge."

And the influence of such education and occu-
pation among such natural objects, Words-
worth expounds in some as fine poetry as ever
issued from the cells of philosophical thought.

"So the foundations of his mind were laid."

The boy had small need of books—

"For many a tale
Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourish'd imagination in her growth,
And gave the mind that apprehensive power
By which she is made quick to recognise
The moral properties and scope of things."

But in the Manse there were books—and he
read

"Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied,
The life and death of martyrs, who sustain'd,
With will inflexible, those fearful pangs,
Triumphantly display'd in records left
Of persecution and the Covenant."

Can you not believe that by the time he was
as old as you were when you used to ride to
the races on a pony, by the side of your sire
the Squire, this boy was your equal in know-
ledge, though you had a private tutor all to
yourself, and were then a promising lad, as
indeed you are now after the lapse of a quar-
ter of a century? True, as yet he "had small
Latin and no Greek;" but the elements of
these languages may be learned—trust us—
by slow degrees—by the mind rejoicing in the
consciousness of its growing faculties—during
leisure hours from other studies—as they were
by the Athol adolescent. A Scholar—in your
sense of the word—he might not be called,
even when he had reached his seventeenth
year, though probably he would have puzzled
you in Livy and Virgil; nor of English poetry
had he read much—the less the better for such
a mind—at that age, and in that condition—
for

"Accumulated feelings press'd his heart
With still increasing weight; he was o'erpower'd
By nature, by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind, by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul
Communing with the glorious Universe."

But he had read Poetry—ay, the same Poetry

that Wordsworth's self read at the same age
—and

“Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty Orb of Sun,
The divine Milton.”

Thus endowed, and thus instructed,

“By Nature, that did never yet betray
The heart that loved her,”

the youth was “greater than he knew;” yet that there was something great in, as well as about him, he felt—

“Thus daily thirsting in that lonesome life,”

for some diviner communication than had yet been vouchsafed to him by the Giver and Inspirer of his restless Being.

“In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he rear'd; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,

And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthen'd and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.”

But he is in his eighteenth year, and

“Is summon'd to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.”

For a season he taught a village school, which many a fine, high, and noble spirit has done and is doing; but he was impatient of the hills he loved, and

“That stern yet kindly spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his native rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attach'd to regions mountainous
Like their own steadfast clouds,) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.”

It had become his duty to choose a profession—a trade—a calling. He was not a gentleman, mind ye, and had probably never so much as heard a rumour of the existence of a silver fork: he had been born with a wooden spoon in his mouth—and had lived, partly from choice and partly from necessity, on a vegetable diet. He had not ten pounds in the world he could call his own; but he could borrow fifty, for his father's son was to be trusted to that amount by any family that chanced to have it among the Athol hills—therefore he resolved on “a hard service,” which

“Gain'd merited respect in simpler times;

When squire, and priest, and they who round them
dwelt

In rustic sequestration, all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR's toil, supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies with the ware he brought.

Would Alfred have ceased to be Alfred had he lived twenty years in the hut where he spoiled the bannocks? Would Gustavus have ceased to be Gustavus had he been doomed to dree an ignoble life in the obscurest nook in Dalecarlia? Were princes and peers in our day degraded by working, in their expatriation, with head or hand for bread? Are the Polish patriots degraded by working at eighteen pence a day, without victuals, on embankments of railroads? “At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature, under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste.” These are Wordsworth's own words, and deserve letters of gold. He has given many a shock to the prejudices of

artificial society; and in ten thousand cases, where the heart of such society was happily sound at the core, notwithstanding the rotten kitchen-stuff with which it was incrustured, the shocks have killed the prejudices; and men and women, encouraged to consult their own breasts, have heard responses there to the truths uttered in music by the high-souled Bard, assuring them of an existence there of capacities of pure delight, of which they had had either but a faint suspicion, or, because “of the world's dread laugh,” feared to indulge, and nearly let die.

Mr. Wordsworth quotes from Heron's *Scotland* an interesting passage, illustrative of the life led in our country at that time by that class of persons from whom he has chosen one—not, mind you, imaginary, though for purposes of imagination—adding that “his own personal knowledge emboldened him to draw the portrait.” In that passage Heron says, “As they wander, each alone, through thinly inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation,” and that, with all their qualifications, no wonder they should contribute much to polish the roughness and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. “In North America,” he says, “traveling merchants from the settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilizing the Indian natives than all the missionaries, Papist or Protestant, who have ever been sent among them;” and, speaking again of Scotland, he says, “it is not more than twenty or thirty years, since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England for the purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life, and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.” We have ourselves known gentlemen who had carried the pack—one of them a man of great talents and acquirements—who lived in his old age in the highest circles of society. Nobody troubled their head about his birth and parentage—for *he was then very rich*; but you could not sit ten minutes in his company without feeling that he was “one of God Almighty's gentlemen,” belonging to the “aristocracy of Nature.”

You have heard, we hope, of Alexander Wilson, the illustrious Ornithologist, second not even to Audubon—and sometimes absurdly called the Great American Ornithologist, because with pen and pencil he painted in colours that will never die—the Birds of the New World. He was a weaver—a Paisley weaver—a useful trade, and a pleasant place—where these now dim eyes of ours first saw the light. And Sandy was a pedlar. Hear his words in an autobiography unknown to the Bard:—“I have this day, I believe, measured the height of an hundred stairs, and explored the recesses of twice that number of miserable habitations; and what have I gained by it?—only two shillings of worldly pelf! but an invaluable treasure of observation. In this elegant dome, wrapt up in glittering silks, and stretched on the downy sofa, recline the fair

daughters of wealth and indolence—the ample mirror, flowery floor, and magnificent couch, their surrounding attendants; while, suspended in his wiry habitation above, the shrill-piped canary warbles to enchanting echoes. Within the confines of that sickly hovel, hung round with squadrons of his brother-artists, the pale-faced weaver plies the resounding lay, or launches the melancholy murmuring shuttle. Lifting his simple latch, and stooping for entrance to the miserable hut, there sits poverty and ever-moaning disease, clothed in dunghill rags, and ever shivering over the fireless chimney. Ascending this stair, the voice of joy bursts on my ear—the bridegroom and bride, surrounded by their jocund companions, circle the sparkling glass and humorous joke, or join in the raptures of the noisy dance—the squeaking fiddle breaking through the general uproar in sudden intervals, while the sounding floor groans beneath its unruly load. Leaving these happy mortals, and ushering into this silent mansion, a more solemn—a striking object presents itself to my view. The windows, the furniture, and every thing that could lend one cheerful thought, are hung in solemn white; and there, stretched pale and lifeless, lies the awful corpse, while a few weeping friends sit, black and solitary, near the breathless clay. In this other place, the fearless sons of Bacchus extend their brazen throats, in shouts like bursting thunder, to the praise of their gorgeous chief. Opening this door, the lonely matron explores, for consolation, her Bible; and in this house the wife brawls, the children shriek, and the poor husband bids me depart, lest his termagant's fury should vent itself on me. In short, such an inconceivable variety daily occurs to my observation in real life, that would, were they moralized upon, convey more maxims of wisdom, and give a juster knowledge of mankind, than whole volumes of *Lives and Adventures*, that perhaps never had a being except in the prolific brains of their fantastic authors."

At a subsequent period he retraced his steps, taking with him copies of his poems to distribute among subscribers, and endeavour to promote a more extensive circulation. Of this excursion also he has given an account in his journal, from which it appears that his success was far from encouraging. Among amusing incidents, sketches of character, occasional sound and intelligent remarks upon the manners and prospects of the common classes of society into which he found his way, there are not a few severe expressions indicative of deep disappointment, and some that merely bespeak the keener pangs of the wounded pride founded on conscious merit. "You," says he, on one occasion, "whose souls are susceptible of the finest feelings, who are elevated to rapture with the least dawnings of hope, and sunk into despondency with the slightest thwartings of your expectations—think what I felt." Wilson himself attributed his ill fortune, in his attempts to gain the humble patronage of the poor for his poetical pursuits, to his occupation. "A *packman* is a character which none esteems, and almost every one despises. The idea that people of

all ranks entertain of them is, that they are mean-spirited loquacious liars, cunning and illiterate, watching every opportunity, and using every mean art within their power, to cheat." This is a sad account of the estimation in which a trade was then held in Scotland, which the greatest of our living poets has attributed to the chief character in a poem comprehensive of philosophical discussions on all the highest interests of humanity. But both Wilson and Wordsworth are in the right: both saw and have spoken truth. Most small packmen were then, in some measure, what Wilson says they were generally esteemed to be—peddling pilferers, and insignificant swindlers. Poverty sent them swarming over bank and brae, and the "sma' kintra towns"—and for a plack people will forget principle who have, as we say in Scotland, missed the world. Wilson knew that to a man like himself there was degradation in such a calling; and he latterly vented his contemptuous sense of it, exaggerating the baseness of the name and nature of *packman*. But suppose such a man as Wilson to have been in better times one of but a few packmen travelling regularly for years over the same country, each with his own district or domain, and there can be no doubt that he would have been an object both of interest and of respect—his opportunities of seeing the very best and the very happiest of humble life, in itself very various, would have been very great; and with his original genius, he would have become, like Wordsworth's Pedlar, a good moral Philosopher.

Without, therefore, denying the truth of his picture of packmanship, we may believe the truth of a picture entirely the reverse, from the hand and heart of a still wiser man—though his wisdom has been gathered from less immediate contact with the coarse garments and clay floors of the labouring poor.

It is pleasant to hear Wordsworth speak of his own "personal knowledge" of packmen or pedlars. We cannot say of him in the words of Burns, "the fient a pride, nae pride had he;" for pride and power are brothers on earth, whatever they may prove to be in heaven. But his prime pride is his poetry; and he had not now been "sole king of rocky Cumberland," had he not studied the character of his subjects in "huts where poor men lie"—had he not "stopped his anointed head" beneath the doors of such huts, as willingly as he ever raised it aloft, with all its glorious laurels, in the palaces of nobles and princes. Yes, the inspiration he "derived from the light of setting suns," was not so sacred as that which often kindled within his spirit all the divinity of Christian man, when conversing charitably with his brother-man, a wayfarer on the dusty high-road, or among the green lanes and alleys of merry England. You are a scholar, and love poetry? Then here you have it of the finest, and will be sad to think that heaven had not made you a pedlar.

"In days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from Hall to Hall,
Baronial Court or Royal; cheer'd with gifts
Munificent, and love, and Ladies' praise;

Now meeting on his road an armed Knight,
 Now resting with a Pilgrim by the side
 Of a clear brook;—beneath an Abbey's roof
 One evening sumptuously lodged; the next
 Humbly, in a religious Hospital;
 Or with some merry Outlaws of the wood;
 Or haply shrouded in a Hermit's cell.
 Him, sleeping or awake, the Robber spared;
 He walk'd—protected from the sword of war
 By virtue of that sacred Instrument
 His Harp, suspended at the Traveller's side,
 His dear companion wheresoe'er he went,
 Opening from Land to Land an easy way
 By melody, and by the charm of verse.
 Yet not the noblest of that honour'd Race
 Drew happier, loftier, more impassion'd thoughts
 From his long journeyings and eventful life,
 Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
 To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
 Of these our unimaginative days;
 Both while he trode the earth in humblest guise,
 Accoutred with his burden and his staff;
 And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

"What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite School
 Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
 Look'd on this Guide with reverential love?
 Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
 Our journey—beneath favourable skies.
 Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
 Unfailing; not a hamlet could we pass,
 Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
 Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
 Some way-beguiling tale.
 —Nor was he loath to enter ragged huts,
 Huts where his charity was blest; his voice
 Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
 And, sometimes, where the Poor Man held dispute
 With his own mind, unable to subdue
 Impatience, through inaptness to perceive
 General distress in his particular lot;
 Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
 Struggling against it, with a soul perplex'd,
 And finding in herself no steady power
 To draw the line of comfort that divides
 Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
 From the injustice of our brother men;
 To him appeal was made as to a judge;
 Who, with an understanding heart, allay'd
 The perturbation; listen'd to the plea,
 Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
 So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
 With softened spirit—e'en when it condemn'd."

What was to hinder such a man—thus born
 and thus bred—with such a youth and such a
 prime—from being in his old age worthy of
 walking among the mountains with Words-
 worth, and descending

"On man, on nature, and on human life?"

And remember he was a *Scotsman*—compatriot
 of CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

What would you rather have had the Sage
 in the *Excursion* to have been? The Senior
 Fellow of a College? A Head? A retired
 Judge? An Ex-Lord Chancellor? A Na-
 bob? A Banker? A Millionaire? or, at once
 to condescend on individuals, Natus Con-
 sumere Fruges, Esquire? or the Honourable
 Custos Rotulorum?

You have read, bright bold neophyte, the
 Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon
 the restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd,
 to the estates and honours of his ancestors?

"Who is he that bounds with joy
 On Carrock's side, a shepherd boy?
 No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
 Light as the wind along the grass.
 Can this be He that hither came
 In secret, like a smother'd flame?
 For whom such thoughtful tears were shed
 For shelter and a poor man's bread?"

Who but the same noble boy whom his high-
 born mother in disastrous days had confided
 when an infant to the care of a peasant. Yet
 there he is no longer safe—and

"The Boy must part from Mosedale groves
 And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
 And quit the flowers that summer brings
 To Glendramakin's lofty springs;
 Must vanish, and his careless cheer
 Be turn'd to heaviness and fear."

Sir Launcelot Threlkeld shelters him till
 again he is free to set his foot on the moun-
 tains.

"Again he wanders forth at will,
 And tends a flock from hill to hill:
 His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
 Such garb with such a noble mien;
 Among the shepherd grooms no mate
 Hath he, a child of strength and state."

So lives he till he is restored—

"Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
 The shepherd-lord was honour'd more and more;
 And, ages after he was laid in earth,
 'The good Lord Clifford' was the name he bore!"

Now mark—that Poem has been declared by
 one and all of the "Poets of Britain" to be
 equal to any thing in the language; and its
 greatness lies in the perfect truth of the
 profound philosophy which so poetically de-
 lineates the education of the naturally noble
 character of Clifford. Does he sink in our
 esteem because at the Feast of the Restora-
 tion he turns a deaf ear to the fervent harper
 who sings,

"Happy day and happy the hour,
 When our shepherd in his power,
 Mounted, mail'd, with lance and sword,
 To his ancestors restored,
 Like a re-appearing star,
 Like a glory from afar,
 First shall head the flock of war?"

No—his generous nature is true to its gene-
 rous nurture; and now deeply imbued with
 the goodness he had too long loved in others
 ever to forget, he appears noblest when show-
 ing himself faithful in his own hall to the
 "huts where poor men lie," while we know
 not, at the solemn close, which life the Poet
 has most glorified—the humble or the high—
 whether the Lord did the Shepherd more en-
 noble, or the Shepherd the Lord.

Now, we ask, is there any essential differ-
 ence between what Wordsworth thus records
 of the high-born Shepherd-Lord in the Feast
 of Brougham Castle, and what he records of
 the low-born Pedlar in the *Excursion*? None.
 They are both educated among the hills; and
 according to the nature of their own souls and
 that of their education, is the progressive
 growth and ultimate formation of their cha-
 racter. Both are exalted beings—because both
 are wise and good—but to his own coeval he
 has given, besides eloquence and genius,

"The vision and the faculty divine,"

that's

"When years had brought the philosophic mind"

he might walk through the dominions of the
 Intellect and the Imagination, a Sage and a
 Teacher.

Look into life, and watch the growth of cha-
 racter. Men are not what they seem to the
 outward eye—mere machines moving about
 in customary occupations—productive labour-
 ers of food and wearing apparel—slaves from
 morn to night at taskwork set them by the
 Wealth of Nations. They are the Children
 of God. The soul never sleeps—not even
 when its wearied body is heard snoring by

people living in the next street. All the souls now in this world are for ever awake; and this life, believe us, though in moral sadness it has often been rightly called so, is no dream. In a dream we have no will of our own, no power over ourselves; ourselves are not felt to be ourselves; our familiar friends seem strangers from some far off country; the dead are alive, yet we wonder not; the laws of the physical world are suspended, or changed, or confused by our fantasy; Intellect, Imagination, the Moral Sense, Affection, Passion, are not possessed by us in the same way we possess them out of that mystery: were life a Dream, or like a Dream, it would never lead to Heaven.

Again, then, we say to you, look into life and watch the growth of character. In a world where the ear cannot listen without hearing the clank of chains, the soul may yet be free as if it already inhabited the skies. For its Maker gave it *LIBERTY OF CHOICE OF GOOD OR OF EVIL*; and if it has chosen the good it is a King. All its faculties are then fed on their appropriate food provided for them in nature. It then knows where the necessities and the luxuries of its life grow, and how they may be gathered—in a still sunny region inaccessible to blight—"no mildewed ear blasting his wholesome brother." In the beautiful language of our friend Aird—

"And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the Hills of God."

Go, read the *EXCURSION* then—venerate the *PEDLAR*—pity the *SOLITARY*—respect the *PRIEST*, and love the *POET*.

So charmed have we been with the sound of our own voice—of all sounds on earth the sweetest surely to our ears—and, therefore, we so dearly love the monologue, and from the dialogue turn averse, impatient of him ycleped the interlocutor, who, like a shallow brook, will keep prattling and babbling on between the still deep pools of our discourse, which nature feeds with frequent waterfalls—so charmed have we been with the sound of our own voice, that scarcely conscious the while of more than a gentle ascent along the sloping sward of a rural Sabbath day's journey, we perceive now that we must have achieved a Highland league—five miles—of rough uphill work, and are standing tiptoe on the Mountain-top. True that his altitude is not very great—somewhere, we should suppose, between two and three thousand feet—much higher than the Pentlands—somewhat higher than the Ochils—a middle-sized Grampian. Great painters and poets know that power lies not in mere measurable bulk. Atlas, it is true, is a giant, and he has need to be so, supporting the globe. So is Andes; but his strength has never been put to proof, as he carries but clouds. The Cordilleras—but we must not be personal—so suffice it to say, that soul, not size, equally in mountains and in men, is and inspires the true sublime. Mont Blanc might be as big again; but what then, if without his glaciers?

These mountains are neither immense nor enormous—nor are there any such in the British Isles. Look for a few of the highest on Riddell's ingenious Scale—in Scotland Ben-

nevis, Helvellyn in England, in Ireland the Reeks; and you see that they are mere mole-hills to Chimborazo. Nevertheless, they are the hills of the Eagle. And think ye not that an Eagle glorifies the sky more than a Condor? That Vulture—for Vulture he is—flies league-high—the Golden Eagle is satisfied to poise himself half a mile above the loch, which, judged by the rapidity of its long river's flow, may be based a thousand feet or more above the level of the sea. From that height methinks the Bird-Royal, with the golden eye, can see the rising and the setting sun, and his march on the meridian, without a telescope. If ever he fly by night—and we think we have seen a shadow passing the stars that was on the wing of life—he must be a rare astronomer.

"High from the summit of a craggy cliff
Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frown
On utmost Kilda's shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
The Royal Eagle rears his vigorous young,
Strong-pounced and burning with paternal fire.
Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own
He drives them from his fort, the towering seat
For ages of his empire; which in peace
Unstain'd he holds, while many a league to sea
He wings his course, and preys in distant isles."

Do you long for wings, and envy the Eagle? Not if you be wise. Alas! such is human nature, that in one year's time the novelty of pinions would be over, and you would skim undelightedly the edges of the clouds. Why do we think it a glorious thing to fly from the summit of some inland mountain away to distant isles? Because our feet are bound to the dust. "We enjoy the eagle's flight far more than the eagle himself driving headlong before the storm; for imagination dallies with the unknown power, and the wings that are denied to our bodies are expanded in our souls. Sublime are the circles the sun-starting creature traces in the heavens, to us who lie stretched among the heather bloom. Could we do the same, we should still be longing to pierce through the atmosphere to some other planet; and an elevation of leagues above the snows of the Himalayas would not satisfy our aspirations. But we can calculate the distances of the stars, and are happy as Galileo in his dungeon.

Yet an Eagle we are, and therefore proud of You our Scottish mountains, as you are of Us. Stretch yourself up to your full height as we now do to ours—and let "Andes, giant of the Western Star," but dare to look at us, and we will tear the "meteor standard to the winds unfurled" from his cloudy hands. There you stand—and were you to rear your summits much higher into heaven you would alarm the hidden stars.

Yet we have seen you higher—but it was in storm. In calm like this, you do well to look beautiful—your solemn altitude suits the sunny season, and the peaceful sky. But when the thunder at mid-day would hide your heads in a night of cloud, you thrust them through the blackness, and show them to the glens, crowned with fire.

Are they a sea of mountains! No—they are mountains in a sea. And what a sea! Waves of water, when at the prodigious, are never higher than the foretop of a man-of-war. Waves

of vapour—they alone are seen flying mountains high—dashing, but howling not—and in their silent ascension, all held together by the same spirit, but perpetually changing its beautiful array, where order seems ever and anon to come in among disorder, there is a grandeur that settles down in the soul of youthful poet roaming in delirium among the mountain glooms, and “pacifies the fever of his heart.”

Call not now these vapours waves; for movement there is none among the ledges, and ridges, and roads, and avenues, and galleries, and groves, and houses, and churches, and castles, and fairy palaces—all framed of mist. Far up among and above that wondrous region, through which you hear voices of waterfalls deepening the silence, behold hundreds of mountain-tops—blue, purple, violet,—for the sun is shining straight on some and aslant on others—and on those not at all; nor can the shepherd at your side, though he has lived among them all his life, till after long pondering tell you the names of those most familiar to him; for they seem to have all interchanged sites and altitudes, and Black Benhyn himself, the Eagle-breeder, looks so serenely in his rainbow, that you might almost mistake him for Ben Louey or the Hill of Hinds.

Have you not seen sunsets in which the mountains were embedded in masses of clouds all burning and blazing—yes, blazing—with unimaginable mixtures of all the colours that ever were born—intensifying into a glory that absolutely became insupportable to the soul as insufferable to the eyes—and that left the eyes for hours after you had retreated from the supernatural scene, even when shut, all filled with floating films of cross-lights, cutting the sky imagery into gorgeous fragments? And were not the mountains of such sunsets, whether they were of land or of cloud, sufficiently vast for your utmost capacities and powers of delight and joy longing to commune with the Region then felt to be in very truth Heaven? Nor could the spirit, entranced in admiration, conceive at that moment any Heaven beyond—while the senses themselves seemed to have had given them a revelation, that as it was created could be felt but by an immortal spirit.

It elevates our being to be in the body near the sky—at once on earth and in Heaven. In the body? Yes—we feel at once fettered and free. In Time we wear our fetters, and heavy though they be, and painfully riveted on, seldom do we welcome Death coming to strike them off—but groan at sight of the executioner. In eternity we believe that all is spiritual—and in that belief, which doubt sometimes shakes but to prove that its foundation lies rooted far down below all earthquakes, endurable is the sound of dust to dust. Poets speak of the spirit, while yet in the flesh, blending, mingling, being absorbed in the great forms of the outward universe, and they speak as if such absorption were celestial and divine. But is not this a material creed? Let Imagination beware how she seeks to glorify the objects of the senses, and having glorified them, to elevate them into a kindred being with our own, exalting them that we may claim with them that kindred being,

as if we belonged to them and not they to us, forgetting that they are made to perish, we to live for ever!

But let us descend the mountain by the side of this torrent. What a splendid series of translucent pools! We carry the Excursion in our pocket, for the use of our friends; but our presentation copy is here—we have gotten it by heart. And it does our heart good to hear ourselves recite. Listen ye Naiads to the famous picture of the Ram:—

“Thus having reach’d a bridge, that overarch’d
The hasty rivulet, where it lay becalm’d
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white Ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful
Beneath him, show’d his shadowy counterpart;
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seem’d centre of his own fair world.
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness to our sight.
Ah! what a pity were it to disperse
Or to disturb so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it.”

Oh! that the Solitary, and the Pedlar, and the Poet, and the Priest and his Lady, were here to see a sight more glorious far than that illustrious and visionary Ram. Two Christopher Norths—as Highland chieftains—in the Royal Tartan—one burning in the air—the other in the water—two stationary meteors, each seeming native to its own element! This setting the heather, that the linn on fire—this a-blaze with war, that tempered into truce; while the Sun, astonished at the spectacle, nor knowing the refulgent substance from the resplendent shadow, bids the clouds lie still in heaven, and the winds all hold their breath, that exulting nature may be permitted for a little while to enjoy the miracle she unawares has wrought—alas! gone as she gazes, and gone for ever! Our bonnet has tumbled into the Pool—and Christopher—like the Ram in the Excursion—stands shorn of his beams—no better worth looking at than the late Laird of Macnab.

Now, since the truth must be told, that was but a Flight of Fancy—and our apparel is more like that of a Lowland Quaker than a Highland chief. ’Tis all of a snuffy brown—an excellent colour for hiding the dirt. Single-breasted our coatee—and we are in shorts. Were our name to be imposed by our hat, it would be Sir Cloudesly Shovel. On our back a wallet—and in our hand the Crutch. And thus, not without occasional alarm to the cattle, though we hurry no man’s, we go stalking along the sward and swinging across the stream, and leaping over the quagmires—by no means unlike that extraordinary pedestrian who has been accompanying us for the last half hour, far overhead up-by yonder, as if he meant mischief; but he will find that we are up to a trick or two, and not easily to be done brown by a native, a Cockney of Cloud-Land, a long-legged awkward fellow with a head like a dragon, and proud of his red plush, in that country called thunder-and-lightning breeches, hot very, one would think, in such sultry weather—but confound us if he has

not this moment strip them off, and be not pursuing his journey in *puris naturalibus*—yes, as naked as the minute he was born—our Shadow on the Clouds!

The Picture of the Ram has been declared by sumphs in search of the sublime to border on the Burlesque. They forget that a sumph may just as truly be said to border on a sage. All things in heaven and on earth, mediately and immediately, border on one another—much depends on the way you look at them—and Poets, who are strange creatures, often love to enjoy and display their power by bringing the burlesque into the region of the sublime. Of what breed was the Tup? Cheviot, Leicester, Southdown? Had he gained the Cup at the Great North Show? We believe not, and that his owner saw in him simply a fine specimen of an ordinary breed—a shapely and useful animal. In size he was not to be named on the same day with the famous Ram of Derby, “whose tail was made a rope, sir, to toll the market-bell.” Jason would have thought nothing of him compared with the Golden Fleece. The Sun sees a superior sire of flocks as he enters Aries. Sorry are we to say it, but the truth must be spoken, he was somewhat bandy-legged, and rather coarse in wool. But heaven, earth, air, and water conspired to glorify him, as the Poet and his friends chanced to come upon him at the Pool, and, more than them all united, the Poet’s own soul; and a sheep that would not have sold for fifty shillings, became Lord Paramount of two worlds, his regal mind all the time unconscious of its empire, and engrossed with the thought of a few score silly ewes.

Seldom have we seen so serene a day. It seems to have lain in one and the same spirit over all the Highlands. We have been wandering since sunrise, and ’tis now near sunset; yet not an hour without a visible heaven in all the Lochs. In the pure element overflowing so many spacious vales and glens profound, the great and stern objects of nature have all day long been looking more sublime or more beautiful in the reflected shadows, invested with one universal peace. The momentary evanescence of all that imagery at a breath touches us with the thought that all it represents, steadfast as seems its endurance, will as utterly pass away. Such visions when gazed on in that wondrous depth and purity on a still slow-moving day, always inspire some such feeling as this; and we sigh to think how transitory must be all things, when the setting sun is seen to sink behind the mountain, and all the golden pomp at the same instant to vanish from the Loch.

Evening is preparing to let fall her shades—and Nature, cool, fresh, and unwearied, is laying herself down for a few hours’ sleep. There had been a long strong summer drought, and a week ago you would have pitied—absolutely pitied the poor Highlands. You missed the cottage-girl with her pitcher at the well in the brae, for the spring scarcely trickled, and the water-cresses were yellow before their time. Many a dancing hill-stream was dead—only here and there one stronger than her sisters attempted a pas-seul over the shelving rocks;

but all choral movements and melodies forsook the mountains, still and silent as so much painted canvas. Waterfalls first tamed their thunder, then listened alarmed to their own echoes, wailed themselves away into diminutive murmurs, gasped for life, died, and were buried at the feet of the green slippery precipices. Tarns sank into moors; and there was the voice of weeping heard and low lament among the water-lilies. Ay, millions of pretty flowrets died in their infancy, even on their mother’s breast; the bee fainted in the desert for want of the honey-dew, and the ground-cells of industry were hushed below the heather. Cattle lay lean on the brownness of a hundred hills, and the hoof of the red-deer lost its fleetness. Along the shores of lochs great stones appeared within what for centuries had been the lowest water-mark; and whole bays, once bright and beautiful with reed-pointed wavelets, became swamps, cracked and seamed, or rustling in the aridity with a useless crop, to the sigh of the passing wind. On the shore of the sea alone you beheld no change. The tides ebbd and flowed as before—the small billows racing over the silver sands to the same goal of shells, or climbing up to the same wild-flowers that bathe the foundation of some old castle belonging to the ocean.

But the windows of heaven were opened—and, like giants refreshed with mountain-dew, the rivers flung themselves over the cliffs with roars of thunder. The autumnal woods are fresher than those of summer. The mild harvest-moon will yet repair the evil done by the outrageous sun; and, in the gracious after-growth, the green earth far and wide rejoices as in spring. Like people that have hidden themselves in caves when their native land was oppressed, out gush the torrents, and descend with songs to the plain. The hill-country is itself again when it hears the voice of streams. Magnificent army of mists! whose array encompasses islands of the sea, and who still, as thy glorious vanguard keeps deploying among the glens, rollest on in silence more sublime than the trampling of the feet of horses, or the sound of the wheels of chariots, to the heath-covered mountains of Scotland, we bid thee hail!

In all our wanderings through the Highlands, towards night we have always found ourselves at home. What though no human dwelling was at hand? We cared not—for we could find a bed-room among the casual inclinations of rocks, and of all curtains the wild-brier forms itself into the most gracefully-festooned draperies, letting in green light alone from the intercepted stars. Many a cave we know of—cool by day, and warm by night—how they happen to be so, we cannot tell—where no man but ourselves ever slept or ever will sleep; and sometimes, on startling a doe at evening in her thicket, we have lain down in her lair, and in our slumbers heard the rain pattering on the roofing birk-tree, but felt not one drop on our face, till at dawning we struck a shower of diamonds from the fragrant tresses. But to-night we shall not need to sleep among the sylvans; for our Tail has pitched our Tent on the Moor—and is now sweeping

the mountain with telescope for sight of our descending feet. Hark! signal-gun and bagpipe hail our advent, and the Pyramid brightens in its joy, independent of the sunlight, that has left but one streak in the sky.

FLIGHT FIRST.—GLEN-ETIVE.

Yes! all we have to do is to let down their lids—to will that our eyes shall see—and, lo! there it is—a creation! Day dawns, and for our delight in soft illumination from the dim obscure floats slowly up a visionary loch— island after island evolving itself into settled stateliness above its trembling shadow, till, from the overpowering beauty of the wide confusion of woods and waters, we seek relief, but find none, in gazing on the sky; for the east is in all the glory of sunrise, and the heads and the names of the mountains are uncertain among the gorgeous colouring of the clouds. Would that we were a painter! Oh! how we should dash on the day and interlace it with night! That chasm should be filled with enduring gloom, thicker and thicker, nor the sun himself suffered to assuage the sullen spirit, now lowering and threatening there, as if portentous of earthquake. Danger and fear should be made to hang together for ever on those cliffs, and halfway up the precipice be fixed the restless cloud ascending from the abyss, so that in imagination you could not choose but hear the cataract. The Shadows should seem to be stalking away like evil spirits before angels of light—for at our bidding the Splendours should prevail against them, deploying from the gates of Heaven beneath the banners of morn. Yet the whole picture should be harmonious as a hymn—as a hymn at once sublime and sweet—serene and solemn—nor should it not be felt as even cheerful—and sometimes as if there were about to be merriment in Nature's heart—for the multitude of the isles should rejoice—and the new-woke waters look as if they were waiting for the breezes to enliven them into waves, and wearied of rest to be longing for the motion already beginning to rustle by fits along the silvan shores. Perhaps a deer or two—but we have opened a corner of the fringed curtains of our eyes—the idea is gone—and Turner or Thomson must transfer from our paper to his canvas the imperfect out-line—for it is no more—and make us a present of the finished picture.

Strange that with all our love of nature, and of art, we never were a Painter. True that in boyhood we were no contemptible hand at a Lion or a Tiger—and sketches by us of such cats springing or preparing to spring in keelavine, dashed off some fifty or sixty years ago, might well make Edwin Landseer stare. Even yet we are a sort of Salvator Rosa at a savage scene, and our black-lead pencil heaps up confused shatterings of rocks, and flings a mountainous region into convulsions, as if an earthquake heaved, *in a way that is no canny*, making people shudder as if something had gone

wrong with this planet of ours, and creation were falling back into chaos. But we love scenes of beautiful repose too profoundly ever to dream of “transferring them to canvas.” Such employment would be felt by us to be desecration—though we look with delight on the work when done by others—the picture without the process—the product of genius without thought of its mortal instruments. We work in words, and words are, in good truth, images, feelings, thoughts; and of these the outer world, as well as the inner, is composed, let materialists say what they will. Prose is poetry—we have proved *that* to the satisfaction of all mankind. Look! we beseech you—how a little Loch seems to rise up with its tall heronry—a central isle—and all its silvan braes, till it lies almost on a level with the floor of our Cave, from which in three minutes we could hobble on our crutch down the inclining greenward to the Bay of Waterlilies, and in that canoe be afloat among the Swans. All birches—not any other kind of tree—except a few pines, on whose tops the large nests repose—and here and there a still bird standing as if asleep. What a place for Roes!

The great masters, were their eyes to fall on our idle words, might haply smile—not contemptuously—on our ignorance of art—but graciously on our knowledge of nature. All we have to do, then, is to learn the theory and practice of art—and assuredly we should forthwith set about doing so, had we any reasonable prospect of living long enough to open an exhibition of pictures from our own easel. As it is, we must be contented with that Gallery, richer than the Louvre, which our imagination has furnished with masterpieces beyond all price or purchase—many of them touched with her own golden finger, the rest the work of high but not superior hands. Imagination, who limns in air, has none of those difficulties to contend with that always beset, and often baffle, artists in oils or waters. At a breath she can modify, alter, obliterate, or restore; at a breath she can colour vacuity with rainbow hues—crown the cliff with its castle—swing the drawbridge over the gulf profound—through a night of woods roll the river along on its moonlit reach—by fragmentary cinctures of mist and cloud, so girdle one mountain that it has the power of a hundred—giant rising above giant, far and wide, as if the mighty multitude, in magnificent and triumphant disorder, were indeed scaling heaven.

To speak more prosaically, every true and accepted lover of nature regards her with a painter's as well as a poet's eye. He breaks not down any scene rudely, and with “many an oft-repeated stroke;” but unconsciously and insensibly he transfigures into Wholes, and all day long, from morn till dewy eve, he is preceded, as he walks along, by landscapes rearing in their perfection, one and all of them the birth of his own inspired spirit. All non-essentials do of themselves drop off and disappear—all the characteristics of the scenery range themselves round a centre recognised by the inner sense that cannot err—and thus it is that “beauty pitches her tents before him”—that sublimity companions the pilgrim in the

waste wilderness—and grandeur for his sake keeps slowly sailing or settling in the clouds. With such pictures has our Gallery been so thickly hung round for many years, that we have often thought there was not room for one other single frame; yet a vacant space has always been found for every new *chef-d'œuvre* that came to add itself to our collection—and the light from that cupola so distributes itself that it falls wherever it is wanted—wherever it is wanted not how tender the shadow! or how solemn the gloom!

Why, we are now in Glen-Etive—and sitting with our sketch book at the mouth of our Tent. Our oft-repeated passionate prayer,

“Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness!”

has once more, after more than twenty years' absence, in this haunt of our fanciful youth and imaginative manhood, been granted, and Christopher, he thinks, could again bound along these cliffs like a deer. Ay, wellnigh quarter of a century has elapsed since we pitched this selfsame snow-white Tent amid the purple heather, by the Linn of Dee. How fleetly goes, winnowing on the air, even the weariest waving of Time's care-laden wings! A few yellow weather-stains are on the canvas—but the pole is yet sound—or call it rather mast—for we have hoisted our topgallant,

“And lo! the silver cross, to Scotland dear,”

languidly lifts itself up, an ineffectual streamer, in the fitful morning breezes!

Bold son, or bright daughter of England! hast thou ever seen a SCOTTISH THURSK? What height are you—Captain of the Grenadier Guards? “Six feet four on my stocking soles.” Poo—a dwarf! Stand up with your back to that stalk. Your head does not reach above his waist—he hangs high over you—“his radious crown of rubies.” There's a Flower! dear to Lady Nature above all others, saving and excepting the Rose, and he is the Rose's husband—the Guardian Genii of the land consecrated the Union, and it has been blest. Eyeing the sun like an angry star that will not suffer eclipse either from light or shadow—but burns proudly—fiercely—in its native lustre—storm-brightened, and undishvelled by the tempest in which it swings. See, it stoops beneath the blast within reach of your hand. Grasp it ere it recoil aloft; and your hand will be as if it had crushed a sleeping wasp-swarm. But you cannot crush it—to do that would require a giant with an iron glove. Then let it alone to dally with the wind, and the sun, and the rain, and the snow—all alike dear to its spears and rubies; and as you look at the armed lustre, you will see a beautiful emblem and a stately of a people's warlike peace. The stalk indeed is slender, but it sways without danger of breaking in the blast; in the calm it reposes as gently as the gowan at its root. The softest leaf that enfolds in silk the sweetest flower of the garden, not greener than those that sting not if but tenderly you touch them, for they are green as the garments of the Fairies that dance by moonlight round the Symbol of old Scotland, and unchristened creatures though they the

Fairies be, they pray heaven to let fall on the AWFUL THURSK all the health and happiness that are in the wholesome stars.

The dawn is softly—slowly—stealing upon day; for the uprisen sun, though here the edge of his disc as yet be invisible, is diffusing abroad “the sweet hour of prime,” and all the eastern region is tinged with crimson, faint and fine as that which sleeps within the wreaths of the sea-sounding shells. Hark! the eagle's earliest cry, yet in his eyry. Another hour, and he and his giant mate will be seen spirally ascending the skies, in many a glorious gyration, tutoring their offspring to dally with the sunshine, that when their plumes are stronger, they may dally with the storm. O Forest of Dalness! how sweet is thy name! Hundreds of red-deer are now lying half-asleep among the fern and heather, with their antlers, could our eyes now behold them, motionless as the birch-tree branches with which they are blended in their lair. At the signal-belling of their king, a hero unconquered in a hundred fights, the whole herd rises at once like a grove, and with their stately heads lifted aloft on the weather-gleam, snuff the sweet scent of the morning air, far and wide surcharged with the honey-dew yet unmelting on the heather, and eye with the looks of liberty the glad daylight that mantles the Black Mount with a many-coloured garment. Ha! the first plunge of the salmon in the Rowan-tree Pool. There again he shoots into the air, white as silver, fresh run from the sea! For Loch-Etive, you must know, is one of the many million arms of Ocean, and bright now are rolling in the billows of the far-heaving tide. Music meet for such a morn and such mountains. Straight stretches the glen for leagues, and then bending through the blue gloom, seems to wind away with one sweep into infinitude. The Great Glen of Scotland—Glen-More itself—is not grander. But the Great Glen of Scotland is yet a living forest. Glen-Etive has few woods or none—and the want of them is sublime. For centuries ago pines and oaks in the course of nature all perished; and they exist now but in tradition wavering on the tongues of old bards, or deep down in the mosses show their black trunks to the light, when the torrents join the river in spate, and the moor divulges its secrets as in an earthquake. Sweetly sung, thou small, brown, moorland bird, though thy song be but a twitter! And true to thy time—even to a balmy minute—art thou, with thy velvet tunic of black striped with yellow, as thou windest thy small but not sullen horn—by us called in our pride HUMBLE BEE—but not, methinks, so very humble, while booming high in air in oft-repeated circles, wondering at our Tent, and at the flag that now unfolds its gaudy length like a burnished serpent, as if the smell of some far-off darling heather-bed had touched thy finest instinct, away thou fliest straight southward to that rich flower-store, unerringly as the carrier-pigeon wafting to distant lands some love-message on its wings. Yet humble after all thou art; for all day long, making thy industry thy delight, thou returnest at shut of day, cheerful even in

thy weariness, to thy ground-cell within the knoll, where as Fancy dreams the Fairies dwell—a Silent People in the Land of Peace.

And why hast thou, wild singing spirit of the Highland Glenorchy, that cheereest the long-withdrawing vale from Inveruren to Dalmally, and from Dalmally Church-tower to the Old Castle of Kilchurn, round whose mouldering turrets thou sweepest with more pensive murmur, till thy name and existence are lost in that noble loch—why hast thou never had thy Bard? “A hundred bards have I had in bygone ages,” is thy reply; “but the Sassenach understands not the traditionary strains, and the music of the Gaelic poetry is wasted on his ear.” Songs of war and of love are yet awakened by the shepherds among these lonely braes; and often when the moon rises over Ben Cruachan, and counts her attendant stars in soft reflection beneath the still waters of that long inland sea, she hears the echoes of harps chiming through the silence of departed years. Tradition tells, that on no other banks did the fairies so love to tread the mazes of their mystic dance, as on the heathy, and brackeney, and oaken banks of the Orchy, during the long summer nights when the thick-falling dews perceptibly swelled the stream, and lent a livelier music to every waterfall.

There it was, on a little river island, that once, whether sleeping or waking we know not, we saw celebrated a Fairy’s Funeral. First we heard small pipes playing, as if no bigger than hollow rushes that whisper to the night winds; and more piteous than aught that trills from earthly instrument was the scarce audible dirge! It seemed to float over the stream, every foam-bell emitting a plaintive note, till the airy anthem came floating over our couch, and then alighted without footsteps among the heather. The pattering of little feet was then heard, as if living creatures were arranging themselves in order, and then there was nothing but a more ordered hymn. The harmony was like the melting of musical dew-drops, and sang, without words, of sorrow and death. We opened our eyes, or rather sight came to them when closed, and dream was vision! Hundreds of creatures, no taller than the crest of the lapwing, and all hanging down their veiled heads, stood in a circle on a green plat among the rocks; and in the midst was a bier, framed as it seemed of flowers unknown to the Highland hills; and on the bier a Fairy, lying with uncovered face, pale as the lily, and motionless as the snow. The dirge grew fainter and fainter, and then died quite away; when two of the creatures came from the circle, and took their station, one at the head and the other at the foot of the bier. They sang alternate measures, not louder than the twittering of the awakened wood-lark before it goes up the dewy air, but dolorous and full of the desolation of death. The flower-bier stirred; for the spot on which it lay sank slowly down, and in a few moments the greensward was smooth as ever—the very dews glittering above the buried Fairy. A cloud passed over the moon; and, with a choral lament, the funeral troop sailed dulkily away, heard afar off, so still was the midnight solitude of the glen. Then the dis-

enthralled Orchy began to rejoice as before through all her streams and falls; and at the sudden leaping of the waters and outbursting of the moon, we awoke.

Age is the season of Imagination, youth of Passion; and having been long young, shall we repine that we are now old? They alone are rich who are full of years—the Lords of Time’s Treasury are all on the staff of Wisdom; their commissions are enclosed in furrows on their foreheads, and secured to them for life. Fearless of fate, and far above fortune, they hold their heritage by the great charter of nature for behoof of all her children who have not, like impatient heirs, to wait for their decease; for every hour dispenses their wealth, and their bounty is not a late bequest but a perpetual benefaction. Death but sanctifies their gifts to gratitude; and their worth is more clearly seen and profoundly felt within the solemn gloom of the grave.

And said we truly that Age is the season of Imagination? That Youth is the season of Passion your own beating and bounding hearts now tell you—your own boiling blood. Intensity is its characteristic; and it burns like a flame of fire, too often but to consume. Expansion of the soul is ours, with all its feelings and all its “thoughts, that wander through eternity;” nor needeth then the spirit to have wings, for power is given her, beyond the dove’s or the eagle’s, and no weariness can touch her on that heavenward flight.

Yet we are all of “the earth earthy,” and young and old alike, must we love and honour our home. Your eyes are bright—ours are dim; but “it is the soul that sees,” and “this diurnal sphere” is visible through the mist of tears. In that light how more than beautiful—how holy—appears even this world! All sadness, save of sin, is then most sacred; and sin itself loses its terrors in repentance, which alas! is seldom perfect but in the near prospect of dissolution. For temptation may intercept her within a few feet of her expected rest, nay, dash the dust from her hand that she has gathered from the burial-place to strew on her head; but Youth sees flowery fields and shining rivers far-stretching before her path, and cannot imagine for a moment that among life’s golden mountains there is many a Place of Tombs!

But let us speak only of this earth—this world—this life—and is not Age the season of Imagination? Imagination is Memory imbued by joy or sorrow with creative power over the past, till it becomes the present, and then, on that vision “far off the coming shines” of the future, till all the spiritual realm overflows with light. Therefore was it that, in illumined Greece, Memory was called the Mother of the Muses; and how divinely indeed they sang around her as she lay in the pensive shade!

You know the words of Milton—

“Till old experience doth attain
To something like prophetic strain;”

and you know, while reading them, that Experience is consummate Memory, Imagination wide as the world, another name for Wisdom, all one with Genius, and in its “prophetic strain”—Inspiration.

We would fain lower our tone—and on this theme speak like what we are, one of the humblest children of Mother Earth. We cannot leap now twenty-three feet on level ground, (our utmost might be twenty-three inches,) nevertheless, we could “put a girdle round the globe in forty minutes,”—ay, in half an hour, were we not unwilling to dispirit Ariel. What are feats done in the flesh and by the muscle? At first—worms though we be—we cannot even crawl;—disdainful next of that acquirement, we creep, and are distanced by the earwig;—pretty lambs, we then totter to the terror of our deep-bosomed dames—till the welkin rings with admiration to behold, sans leading-strings, the weanlings walk;—like wildfire then we run—for we have found the use of our feet;—like wild-geese then we fly—for we may not doubt we have wings;—in car, ship, balloon, the lords of earth, sea, and sky, and universal nature. The car runs on a post—the ship on a rock—the “air hath bubbles as the water hath”—the balloon is one of them, and bursts like a bladder—and we become the prey of sharks, surgeons, or sextons. Where, pray, in all this is there a single symptom or particle of Imagination? It is of Passion “all compact.”

True, this is not a finished picture—’tis but a slight sketch of the season of Youth; but paint it as you will, as if faithful to nature you will find Passion in plenty, and a dearth of Imagination. Nor is the season of Youth therefore to be pitied—for Passion respites and expires in bliss ineffable, and so far from being eloquent as the unwise lecture, it is mute as a fish, and merely gasps. In Youth we are the creatures—the slaves of the senses. But the bondage is borne exultingly in spite of its severity; for erelong we come to discern through the dust of our own raising, the pinnacles of towers and temples serenely ascending into the skies, high and holy places for rule, for rest, or for religion, where as kings we may reign, as priests minister, as saints adore.

We do not deny, excellent youth, that to your eyes and ears beautiful and sublime are the sights and sounds of Nature—and of Art her Angel. Enjoy thy pupilage, as we enjoyed ours, and deliver thyself up withouten dread, or with a holy dread, to the gloom of woods, where night for ever dwells—to the glory of skies, where morn seems enthroned for ever. Coming and going a thousand and a thousand times, yet, in its familiar beauty, ever new as a dream—let thy soul span the heavens with the rainbow. Ask thy heart in the wilderness if that “thunder, heard remote,” be from cloud or cataract; and ere it can reply, it may shudder at the shuddering moor, and your flesh creep upon your bones, as the heather seems to creep on the bent, with the awe of a passing earthquake. Let the sea-mew be the guide up the glen, if thy delight be in peace profounder than ever sat with her on the lull of summer waves! For the inland loch seems but a vale overflowing with wondrous light—and realities they all look—these trees and pastures, and rocks and hills, and clouds—not softened images, as they are, of realities that

are almost stern even in their beauty, and in their sublimity overawing; look at yon precipice that dwindles into pebbles the granite blocks that choke up the shore!

Now all this, and a million times more than all this, have we too done in our Youth, and yet ’tis all nothing to what we do whenever we will it in our Age. For almost all that is passion; spiritual passion indeed—and as all emotions are akin, they all work with, and into one another’s hands, and, however remotely related, recognise and welcome one another, like Highland cousins, whenever they meet. Imagination is not the Faculty to stand aloof from the rest, but gives the one hand to Fancy and the other to Feeling, and sets to Passion, who is often so swallowed up in himself as to seem blind to their *vis-a-vis*, till all at once he hugs all the Three, as if he were demented, and as suddenly sporting *dos-a-dos*—is off on a gallopade by himself right slick away over the mountain-tops.

To the senses of a schoolboy a green sour crab is as a golden pippin, more delicious than any pine-apple—the tree which he climbs to pluck it seems to grow in the garden of Eden—and the parish—moorland though it be—over which he is let loose to play—Paradise. It is barely possible there may be such a substance as matter, but all its qualities worth having are given it by mind. By a necessity of nature, then, we are all poets. We all make the food we feed on; nor is jealousy, the green-eyed monster, the only wretch who discolours and deforms. Every evil thought does do—every good thought gives fresh lustre to the grass—to the flowers—to the stars. And as the faculties of sense, after becoming finer and more fine, do then, because that they are earthly, gradually lose their power, the faculties of the soul, because that they are heavenly, become then more and more and more independent of such ministrations, and continue to deal with images, and with ideas which are diviner than images, nor care for either partial or total eclipse of the daylight, conversant as they are, and familiar with a more resplendent—a spiritual universe.

You still look incredulous and unconvinced of the truth of our position—but it was established in our first three paragraphs; and the rest, though proofs too, are intended merely for illustrations. Age alone understands the language of old Mother Earth—for Age alone, from his own experience, can imagine its meanings in trouble or in rest—often mysterious enough even to him in all conscience—but intelligible though inarticulate—nor always inarticulate; for though sobs and sighs are rife, and whispers and murmurs, and groans and gurgling, yea, sometimes yells and cries, as if the old Earth were undergoing a violent death—yet many a time and oft, within these few years, have we heard her slowly syllabing words out of the Bible, and as in listening we looked up to the sky, the fixed stars responded to their truth, and, like Mercy visiting Despair, the Moon bore it into the heart of the stormy clouds.

And are there not now—have there never been young Poets? Many; for Passion, so

tossed as to leave, perhaps to give, the sufferer power to reflect on his ecstasy, grows poetical because creative, and loves to express itself in "prose or numerous verse," at once its nutriment and relief. Nay, Nature sometimes gifts her children with an imaginative spirit, that, from slight experiences of passion, rejoices to idealize intentions, and incidents, and characters all coloured by it, or subject to its sway; and these are Poets, not with old heads on young shoulders, but with old hearts in young bosoms; yet such premature genius seldom escapes blight, the very springs of life are troubled, and its possessor sinks, pines, fades, and dies. So was it with Chatterton and Keates.

It may be, after all, that we have only proved Age to be the strongest season of Imagination; and if so, we have proved all we wish, for we seek not to deny, but to vindicate. Knowledge is power to the poet as it is power to all men—and indeed without Art and Science what is Poetry? Without cultivation the faculty divine can have but imperfect vision. The inner eye is dependent on the outward eye long familiar with material objects—a finer sense, cognisant of spiritualities, but acquired by the soul from constant communion with shadows—innate the capacity, but awakened into power by gracious intercourse with Nature. Thus Milton *saw*—after he became blind.

But know that Age is not made up of a multitude of years—though that be the vulgar reckoning—but of a multitude of experiences; and that a man at thirty, if good for much, must be old. How long he may continue in the prime of Age, God decrees; many men of the most magnificent minds—for example, Michael Angelo—have been all-glorious in power and majesty at fourscore and upwards; but one drop of water on the brain can at any hour make it barren as dust. So can great griefs.

Yestreen we had rather a hard bout of it in the Tent—the Glenlivet was pithy—and our Tail sustained a total overthrow. They are snoring as if it still were midnight. And is it thus that we sportsmen spend our time on the Moors? Yet while "so many of our poorest subjects are yet asleep," let us repoint the nib of our pen, and in the eye of the sweet-breath'd morning—moralize.

Wellnigh quarter a century, we said, is over and gone since by the Linn of Dee we pitched—on that famous excursion—THE TENT. Then was the genesis of that white witch Maga.

"Like some tall Palm her noiseless fabric grew!"

Nay, not noiseless—for the deafest wight that ever strove to hear with his mouth wide open, might have sworn that he heard the sound of ten thousand hammers. Neither grew she like a Palm—but like a Banyan-tree. Ever as she threw forth branches from her great unexhausted stem, they were borne down by the weight of their own beauty to the soil—the deep, black rich soil in which she grew, originally sown there by a bird of Paradise, that dropt the seed from her beak as she sailed along in the sunshiny ether—and every limberest spray there again taking root, reascended a stately scion, and so on ceaselessly

through all the hours, each in itself a spring-season, till the figurative words of Milton have been fulfilled—

—"Her arms

Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade
High overarch'd, and echoing walks between;
There oft the Ettrick Shepherd, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loopholes cut through thickest shade."

But alas! for the Odontist! He, the "*Deliciae generis Humani*," is dead. The best of all the Bishops of Bristol is no more. Mansel had not a tithe of his wit—nor Kaye a tithe of his wisdom. And can it be that we have not yet edited "His Remains!" "Alas! poor Yorick!" If Hamlet could smile even with the skull of the Jester in his hands, whom when a princely boy he had loved, hanging on his neck many a thousand times, why may not we, in our mind's eye seeing that mirthful face "quite chap-fallen," and hearing as if dismally deadened by the dust, the voice that "so often set our table on a roar!" Dr. Parr's wig, too, is all out of frizzle; a heavier shot has dishevelled its horsehair than ever was sent from the Shepherd's gun; no more shall it be mistaken for owl a-blink on the mid-day bough, or ptarmigan basking in the sun high up among the regions of the snow. It has vanished, with other lost things, to the Moon; and its image alone remains for the next edition of the celebrated treatise "*De Rebus Deperditis*," a suitable and a welcome frontispiece, transferred thither by the engraver's cunning from the first of those Eight Tomes that might make the Throne tremble, laid on the shoulders of Atlas who threatens to put down the Globe, by the least judicious and the most unmerciful of editors that ever imposed upon the light living the heavy dead—John Johnson, late of Birmingham, Fellow of the Royal Society, and of the Royal College of Physicians, whose practice is duller than that of all Death's doctors, and his prescriptions in that preface unchristianly severe. O'Doherty, likewise, has been gathered to his fathers. The Standard-bearer has lowered his colours before the foe who alone is invincible. The Ensign, let us not fear, has been advanced to a company without purchase, in the Celestials; the Adjutant has got a Staff appointment. Tims was lately rumoured to be in a galloping consumption; but the very terms of the report, about one so sedentary, were sufficient to give it the lie. Though puny, he is far from being unwell; and still engaged in polishing tea-spoons and other plated articles, at a rate cheaper than travelling gipsies do horn. Prince Leopold is now King of the Belgians—but we must put an end in the Tent to that portentous snore.

"Arise, awake, or be for ever fallen!"

Ho—ho! gentlemen—so you have had the precaution to sleep in your clothes. The sun, like Maga, is mounting higher and higher in heaven; so let us, we beseech you, to break-fast, and then off to the Moors.

"Substantial breakfast!" by Dugald Dhu, and by Donald Roy, and by Hamish Bhan-heaped up like icebergs round the pole. How nobly stands in the centre that ten-gallon Cask

of Glenlivet! Proud is that round to court his shade. That twenty-pound Salmon lies beneath it even as yesterday he lay beneath the cliff, while a column of light falls from him on that Grouse-Pie. Is not that Ham beautiful in the calm consciousness of his protection? That Tongue mutely eloquent in his praise? Tap him with your knuckles, tenderly as if you loved him—and that with all your heart and soul you do—and is not the response firm as from the trunk of the gnarled oak? He is yet "Virgin of Proserpina"—"by Jove" he is; no wanton lip has ever touched his mouth so chaste; so knock out the bung, and let us hear him gurgle. With diviner music does he fill the pitcher, and with a diviner liquidity of light than did ever Naiad from fount of Helicon or Castaly, pour into classic urn gracefully uplifted by Grecian damsel to her graceful head, and borne away, with a thanksgiving hymn, to her bower in the olive-grove.

All eggs are good eating; and 'tis a vulgar heresy which hold that those laid by sea-fowl have a fishy taste. The egg of the Sea-mew is exceeding sweet; so is that of the Gull. Pleasant is even the yolk of the Cormorant—in the north of England cycled the Scarth, and in the Lowlands of Scotland the Black Byuter. Try a Black Byuter's egg, my dear boy; for though not newly laid, it has since May been preserved in butter, and is as fresh as a daisy after a shower. Do not be afraid of stumbling on a brace of embryo Black Byuters in the interior of the globe, for by its weight we pronounce it an egg in no peril of parturition. You may now smack your lips, loud as if you were smacking your palms, for that yellow morsel was unknown to Vitellius. Don't crush the shell, but throw it into the Etive, that the Fairies may find it at night, and go dancing in the fragile but buoyant canoe, in fits of small shrill laughter, along with the foam-bells over the ebbtide Rapids above Connal's raging Ferry.

The salmon is in shivers, and the grouse-pie has vanished like a dream.

"So fades, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,
All that this world is proud of!"

Only a goose remains! and would that he too were gone to return no more; for he makes us an old man. No tradition survives in the Glen of the era at which he first flourished. He seems to have belonged to some tribe of the Anseres now extinct; and as for his own single individual self, our senses tell us, in a language not to be misinterpreted, that he must have become defunct in the darkness of antiquity. But nothing can be too old for a devil—so at supper let us rectify him in Cayenne.

Oh! for David Wilkie, or William Simpson, (while we send Gibb to bring away yonder Shieling and its cliff,) to paint a picture—coloured, if possible, from the life—of the Interior of our airy Pyramid. Door open, and perpendicular canvas walls folded up—that settled but cloudy sky, with here its broad blue fields, and there its broad blue glimpsing glades—this greensward mound in the midst of a wilderness of rock-strewn hether—as much of that one mountain, and as many of those others, as

it can be made to hold—that bright bend of the river—a silver bow—and that white-sanded, shelly, shingly shore at Loch-Etive Head, on which a troop of Tritons are "charging with all their chivalry," still driven back and still returning, to the sound of trumpets, of "flutes and soft recorders," from the sea. On the table, all strewn and scattered "in confusion worse confounded," round the Cask, which

———"dilated stands
Like Teneriffe or Atlas unremoved,"

what "buttery touches" might be given to the

———"reliquias Danaum atque inmitis Achillei!"

Then the camp-beds tidily covered and arranged along their own department of the circle—quaint dresses hanging from loops, all the various apparelling of hunter, shooter, fisher, and forester—rods, baskets, and nets occupying their picturesque division—fowling-pieces, double and single, rejoicing through the oil-smooth brownness of their barrels in the exquisite workmanship of a Manton and a Lancaster—American rifles, with their stocks more richly silver-chased than you could have thought within reach of the arts in that young and prosperous land—duck-guns, whose formidable and fatal length had in Lincolnshire often swept the fens—and on each side of the door, a brass carronade on idle hours to awaken the echoes—sitting erect on their hurdies, deerhound, greyhound, lurcher, pointer, setter, spaniel, varmint, and though last, not least, O'Bronte watching Christopher with his steadfast eyes, slightly raised his large hanging triangular ears, his Thessalian bull dewlaps betokening keen anxiety to be off and away to the mountain, and with a full view of the white star on his coal-black breast,—

"Plaided and plumed in their Tartan array,"

our three chosen Highlanders, chosen for their strength and their fleetness from among the prime Children of the Mist—and Tickler the Tall, who keeps growing after threescore and ten like a stripling, and leaves his mark within a few inches of the top of the pole, arrayed in tights of Kendal green, bright from the skylight of the inimitable Vallance or the matchless Williams—green too his vest, and green also his tunic—while a green feather in a green bonnet dances in its airy splendour, and gold button-holes give at once lustre and relief to the glowing verdure, (such was Little John, when arrayed in all his glory, to walk behind Robin Hood and Maid Marian, as they glided from tree to tree, in wait for the fallow-deer in merry Sherwood,)—North in his Quaker garb—Quaker-like all but in cuffs and flaps, which, when he goes to the Forest, are not—North, with a figure combining in itself all the strength of a William Penn, sans its corpulency, all the agility of a Jem Belcher with far more than a Jem Belcher's bottom—with a face exhibiting in rarest union all the philosophy of a Bacon, the benevolence of a Howard, the wisdom of a Wordsworth, the fire of a Byron, the gnosticity of a John Bee, and the up-to-trappishness combined not only with perfect honesty, but with honour bright, of the Sporting Editor of Bell's Life in London—and then, why if Wilkie or

Simpson fail in making a GEM of all that, they are not the men of genius we took them for, that is all, and the art must be at a low ebb indeed in these kingdoms.

Well, our Tail has taken wings to itself and flown away with Dugald Dhu and Donald Roy; and we, with Hamish Bhan, with Ponto, Piro, Basta, and O'Bronte, are left by ourselves in the Tent. Before we proceed farther, it may not be much amiss to turn up our little fingers—yestreen we were all a leetle opstropelous—and spermaceti is not a more “sovereign remedy for an inward bruise,” than is a hair from the dog's tail that bit you an antidote to any pus that produces rabies in the shape of hydrophobia. Fill up the quech, Hamish! a caulker of Milbank can harm no man at any hour of the day—at least in the Highlands. Sma' Stell, Hamish—assuredly Sma' Stell!

Ere we start, Hamish, play us a Gathering—and then a Pibroch. “The Campbells are coming” is like a storm from the mountain sweeping Glen-More, that roars beneath the hastening hurricane with all its woods. No earthquake like that which accompanies the trampling of ten thousand men. So, round that shoulder, Hamish—and away for a mile up the Glen—then, turning on your heel, blow till proud might be the mother that bore you; and from the Tent-mouth Christopher will keep smart fire from his Pattereroes, answered by all the echoes. Hamish—indeed

“The dun-deer's hide
On swifter foot was never tied—”

for even now as that cloud—rather thunderous in his aspect—settles himself over the Tent—ere five minutes have elapsed—a mile off is the sullen sound of the bagpipe!—music which, if it rouse you not when heard among the mountains, may you henceforth confine yourself to the Jew's harp. Ay, here's a claymore—let us fling away the scabbard—and in upon the front rank of the bayoneted muskets, till the Saxon array reels, or falls just where it has been standing, like a swathe of grass. So swept of old the Highlanders—shepherds and herdsmen—down the wooded cliffs of the pass of Killiekrankie, till Mackay's red-coats lay redder in blood among the heather, or passed away like the lurid fragments of a cloud. “The Campbell's are coming!”—and we will charge with the heroes in the van. The whole clan is maddening along the Moor—and Maccallum More himself is at their head. But we beseech you, O'Bronte! not to look so like a lion—and to hush in your throat and breast that truly leonine growl—for after all, 'tis but a bagpipe with ribands

“Streaming like meteors to the troubled air,”
and all our martial enthusiasm has evaporated in—wind.

But let us inspect Brown Bess. Till sixty, we used a single barrel. At seventy we took to a double;—but dang detonators—we stick to the flint. “Flint,” says Colonel Hawker, “shoots strongest into the bird.” A percussion-gun is quicker, but flint is fast enough; and it does, indeed, argue rather a confusion than a rapidity of ideas, to find fault with lightning for being too slow. With respect to the flash in the pan, it is but a fair warning to

ducks, for example, to dive if they can, and get out of the way of mischief. It is giving birds a chance for their lives, and is it not ungenerous to grudge it? When our gun goes to our shoulder, that chance is but small; for with double-barrel Brown Bess, it is but a word and a blow,—the blow first, and long before you could say Jack Robinson, the gorcock plays thud on the heather. But we beg leave to set the question at rest for ever by one single clencher. We have killed fifty birds—grouse—at fifty successive shots—one bird only to the shot. And mind, not mere pouts—cheepers—for we are no chicken-butchers—but all thumpers—cocks and hens as big as their parents, and the parents themselves likewise; not one of which fell out of bounds, (to borrow a phrase from the somewhat silly though skilful pastime of pigeon-shooting,) except one that suddenly soared halfway up to the moon, and then

“Into such strange vagaries fell
As he would dance,”

and tumbled down stone-dead into a loch. Now, what more could have done a detonator in the hands of the devil himself? Satan might have shot as well, perhaps, as Christopher North—better we defy him; and we cannot doubt that his detonator—given to him in a present, we believe, by Joe Manton—is a prime article—one of the best ever manufactured on the percussion system. But what more could he have done? When we had killed our fiftieth bird in style, we put it to the Christian reader, would not the odds have been six to four on the flint? And would not Satan, at the close of the match, ten birds behind perhaps, and with a bag shamefully rich in poor pouts, that would have fallen to the ground had he but thrown salt on their tails, have looked excessively sheepish? True, that in rain or snow the percussion-lock will act, from its detonating power, more correctly than the common flint-lock, which, begging its pardon, will then often not act at all; but that is its only advantage, and we confess a great one, especially in Scotland, where it is a libel on the country to say that it always rains, for it almost as often snows. However, spite of wind and weather, we are faithful to flint; nor shall any newfangled invention, howsoever ingenious, wean us from our First Love.

Let not youthful or middle-aged sportsmen—in whose veins the blood yet gallops, canters, or trots—despise us, Monsieur Vieillard, in whose veins the blood creeps like a wearied pedestrian at twilight hardly able to hobble into the wayside inn—for thus so long preferring the steel-pen to the steel barrel (the style of both is equally polished)—our Bramah to our Manton. Those two wild young fellows, Tickler and the Admiral, whose united ages amount to little more than a century and a half, are already slaughtering their way along the mountain side, the one on Bauchaille Etive, and the other on the Black Mount. But we love not to commit murder long before meridian—“gentle lover of Nature” as we are; and so, in spite of the scorn of the more passionate sportsman, we shall continue for an hour or two longer inditing, ever and anon lifting our eyes from whitey-brown paper to whitey-blue

sky, from memorandum-book to mountain, from inkbottle to loch, and delight ourselves, and perchance a few thousand others, by a waking-dream description of Glen-Etive.

'Tis a vast Glen. Not one single human dwelling any where spec-like on the river-winding plain—or nest-like among the brushwood knolls—or rock-like among the fractured cliffs far up on the mountain region do our eyes behold, eager as they are to discover some symptoms of life. Two houses we know to be in the solitude—ay, two—one of them near the head of the Loch, and the other near the head of the Glen—but both distant from this our Tent, which is pitched between, in the very heart of the Moor. We were mistaken in saying that Dalness is invisible—for yonder it looms in sullen light, and before we have finished the sentence, may have again sunk into the moor. Ay, it is gone—for lights and shadows coming and going, we know not whence nor whither, here travel all day long—the sole tenants—very ghost-like—and seemingly in their shiftings embued with a sort of dim uncertain life. How far off from our Tent may be the Loch? Miles—and silently as snow are seen to break the waves along the shore, while beyond them hangs, in aerial haze, the great blue water. How far off from our Tent may be the mountains at the head of the Glen? Miles—for though that speck in the sky into which they upheave their mighty altitudes, be doubtless an eagle, we cannot hear its cry. What giants are these right opposite our Pyramid? Co—grim chieftain—and his Tail. What an assemblage of thunder-riven cliffs! This is what may be well called—Nature on a grand scale. And then, how simple! We begin to feel ourselves—in spite of all we can do to support our dignity by our pride—a mighty small and insignificant personage. We are about six feet high—and every body around us about four thousand. Yes, that is the Four Thousand Feet Club! We had no idea that in any situation we could be such dwindled dwarfs, such perfect pigmies. Our Tent is about as big as a fir-cone—and Christopher North an insect!

What a wild world of clouds all over that vast central wilderness of Northern Argyleshire lying between Cruachan and Melnatorran—Corryfinuarach and Ben Slarive a prodigious land! defying description, and in memory resembling not realities, but like fragments of tremendous dreams. Is it a sterile region? Very. In places nothing but stones. Not a blade of grass—not a bent of heather—not even moss. And so they go shouldering up into the sky—enormous masses—huger than churches or ships. And sometimes not unlike such and other structures—all huddled together—yet never jostling, so far as we have seen; and though often overhanging, as if the wind might blow them over with a puff, steadfast in the storm that seems rather to be an earthquake, and moving not a hair's-breadth, while all the shingly sides of the mountains—you know shingle—with an inconstant clatter—huryskurry—seem to be breaking up into debris.

Is that the character of the whole region? No, you darling; it has vales on vales of eme

rall, and mountains on mountains of amethyst, and streams on streams of silver; and, so help us Heaven!—for with these eyes we have seen them, a thousand and a thousand times—at sunrise and sunset, rivers on rivers of gold. What kind of climate? All kinds, and all kinds at once—not merely during the same season, but the same hour. Suppose it three o'clock of a summer afternoon—you have but to choose your weather. Do you desire a close, sultry, breathless gloom? You have it in the stifling dens of Ben-Anéa, where lions might breed. A breezy coolness, with a sprinkling of rain? Then open your vest to the green light in the dewy vales of Benlūra. Lochs look lovely in mist, and so thinks the rainbow—then away with you ere the rainbow fade—away, we beseech you, to the wild shores of Lochan-a-Lùrich. But you would rather see a storm, and hear some Highland thunder? There is one at this moment on Unimore, and Cruachla grows to Meallanuir, till the cata-racts of Glasgour are dumb as the dry rocks of Craig-Teònan.

In those regions we were, when a boy, initiated into the highest mysteries of the Highlands. No guide dogged our steps—as well might a red-deer have asked a cur to show him the Forest of Braemar, or Beniglo—an eagle where best to build his eyry have advised with the Glasgow Gander. O heavens! how we were bewildered among the vast objects that fed that delirium of our boyhood! We dimly recognised faces of cliffs wearing dreadful frowns; blind though they looked, they seemed sensible of our approach; and we heard one horrid monster mutter, "What brings thee here, infatuated Pech—begone!" At his impotent malice we could not choose but smile, and shook our staff at the blockhead, as since at many a greater blockhead even than he have we shook—and more than shook our Crutch. But as through "pastures green and quiet waters by," we pursued, from sunrise to sunset, our unaccompanied way, some sweet spot, surrounded by heather, and shaded by fern, would woo us to lie down on its bosom, and enjoy a visionary sleep! Then it was that the mountains confidentially told us their names—and we got them all by heart; for each name characterized its owner by some of his peculiar and prominent qualities—as if they had been one and all christened by poets baptizing them from a font

"Translucent, pure,
With touch ethereal of heaven's fiery rod."

O happy pastor of a peaceful flock! Thou hast long gone to thy reward! One—two—three—four successors hast thou had in that manse—(now it too has been taken down and the plough gone over it)—and they all did their duty; yet still is thy memory fragrant in the glen; for deeds like thine "smell sweet, and blossom in the dust!" Under heaven, we owed our life to thy care of us in a brain fever. Sometimes thy face would grow grave, never angry, at our sallies—follies—call them what you will, but not sins. And methinks we hear the mild old man somewhat mournfully saying, "Mad boy! out of gladness often cometh grief—out of mirth misery; but our prayers,

when thou leavest us, shall be, that never, never, may such be thy fate!" Were those prayers heard in heaven and granted on earth? We ask our heart in awe, but its depths are silent, and make no response.

But is it our intention to sit scribbling here all day? Our fancy lets our feet enjoy their sinecure, and they stretch themselves out in indolent longitude beneath the Tent-table, while we are settled in spirit, a silent thought, on the battlements of our cloud-castle on the summit of Cruachan. What a prospect! Our cloud-castle rests upon a foundation of granite precipices; and down along their hundred chasms, from which the eye recoils, we look on Loch-Etive bearing on its bosom stationary—so it seems in the sunshine—one snow-white sail! What brings the creature there—and on what errand may she be voyaging up the uninhabited sea-arm that stretches away into the uninhabited mountains? Some poet, perhaps, steers her—sitting at the helm in a dream, and allowing her to dance her own way, at her own will, up and down the green glens and hills of the foam-crested waves—a swell rolling in the beauty of light and music for ever attendant on her, as the Sea-mew—for so we choose to name her—pursues her voyage—now on water, and now, as the breezes drop, in the air—elements at times undistinguishable, as the shadows of the clouds and of the mountains mingle their imagery in the sea. Oh! that our head, like that of a spider, were all studded with eyes—that our imagination, sitting in the "palace of the soul," (a noble expression, borrowed or stolen by Byron from Waller,) might see all at once all the sights from centre to circumference, as if all rallying around her for her own delight, and oppressing her with the poetry of nature—a lyrical, and elegiac, an epic, or a tragic strain. Now the bright blue water-gleams enchain her vision, and are felt to constitute the vital, the essential spirit of the whole—Loch Awe land-serpent, large as serpent of the sea, lying asleep in the sun, with his burnished skin all bedropt with scales of silver and of gold—the lands of Lorn, mottled and speckled with innumerable lakelets, where fancy sees millions of water-lilies riding at anchor in bays where the breezes have fallen asleep—Oban, splendid among the splendours of that now almost motionless mediterranean, the mountain-loving Linnhe Loch—Jura, Isla, Colonsay, and nameless other islands, floating far and wide away on—on to Coll and Tiree, drowned beneath the faint horizon. But now all the eyes in our spider-head are lost in one blaze of undistinguishable glory; for the whole Highlands of Scotland are up in their power against us—rivers, lochs, seas, islands, cliffs, clouds, and mountains. The pen drops from our hand, and here we are—not on the battlements of the air-palace on the summit of Cruachan—but sitting on a tripod or three-legged stool at the mouth of our Tent, with our MS. before us, and at our right hand a quech of Glenlivet, fresh drawn from yonder ten-gallon cask—and here's to the health of "Honest men and bonny lasses" all over the globe.

So much for description—an art in which the Public (God bless her, where is she now—

and shall we ever see her more!) has been often pleased to say that we excel. But let us off to the Moor. Piro! Ponto! Basta! to your paws, and O'Bronte, unfurl your tail to heaven. Pointers! ye are a noble trio. White, O Ponto! art thou as the foam of the sea. Piro! thou tan of all tans! red art thou as the dun-deer's hide, and fleet as he while thou rangest the mountain brow, now hid in heather, and now re-appearing over the rocks. Waur hawk, Basta!—for finest-scented through be thy scar let nostrils, one bad trick alone hast thou; and whenever that gray wing glances from some pillar-stone in the wilderness, headlong goest thou, O lawless negro! But behave thyself to-day, Basta! and let the kestrel unheeded sail or sun herself on the cliff. As for thee, O'Bronte! the sable dog with the star-bright breast, keep thou like a serf at our heels, and when our course lies over the fens and marshes, thou mayst sweep like a hairy hurricane among the flappers, and haply to-day grip the old drake himself, and with thy fan-like tail proudly spread in the wind, deposit at thy master's feet, with a smile, the monstrous mallard.

But in what direction shall we go, callants—towards what air shall we turn our faces? Over yonder cliffs shall we ascend, and descend into Glen-Creran, where the stony regions that the ptarmigan love melts away into miles of the grouse heather, which, ere we near the salmon-haunted Loch so beautiful, loses itself in woods that mellow all the heights of Glen Ure and Fasnacloigh with silvan shades, wherein the cushat coos, and the roe glides through the secret covert! Or shall we away up by Kinloch-Etive, and Melnatorran, and Mealgayre, into the Solitude of Streams, that from all their lofty sources down to the far-distant Loch have never yet brooked, nor will they ever brook, the bondage of bridges, save of some huge stone flung across some chasm, or trunk of a tree—none but trunks of trees there, and all dead for centuries—that had sunk down where it grew, and spanned the flood that eddies round it with a louder music? Wild region! yet not barren; for there are cattle on a thousand hills, that, wild as the very red-deer, toss their heads as they snuff the feet of rarest stranger, and form round him in a half-alarmed and half-threatening crescent. There flocks of goats—outliers from Dalness—may be seen as if following one another on the very air, along the lichen-stained cliffs that frown down unfathomed abysses—and there is frequent heard the whirring of the gorcock's wing, and his gobbie gathering together his brood, scattered by the lightning that in its season volleys through the silence, else far deeper than that of death;—for the silence of death—that is of a churchyard filled with tombs—is nothing to the austerity of the noiselessness that prevails under the shadow of Unimore and Attchorachen, with their cliffs on which the storms have engraven strange hieroglyphical inscriptions, which, could but we read them wisely, would record the successive ages of the Earth, from the hour when fire or flood first moulded the mountains, down to the very moment that we are speaking, and with small steel-hammer roughening the edges of our

faints that they may fail not to murder. Or shall we away down by Armaddy, where the Fox-Hunter dwells—and through the woods of Inverkinglass and Achran, “double, double, toil and trouble” overcome the braes of Ben-anea and Mealcopucaich, and drop down like two unwearied eagles into Glen-Serae, with a peep in the distance of the young tower of Dalmally, and the old turrets of Kilchurn? Rich and rare is the shooting-ground, Hamish, which by that route lies between this our Tent and the many tarns that freshen the wildernesses of Lochanancricoch. Say the word—tip the wink—tongue on your cheek—up with your forefinger—and we shall go; for hark, Hamish, our chronometer chimes eight—a long day is yet before us—and what if we be benighted? We have a full moon and plenty of stars.

All these are splendid schemes—but what say you, Hamish, to one less ambitious, and better adapted to Old Kit? Let us beat all the best bits down by Armaddy—the Forge—Gleno, and Inveraw. We may do that well in some six or seven hours—and then let us try that famous salmon-cast nearest the mansion—(you have the rods?)—and if time permit, an hour’s trolling in Loch Awe, below the Pass of the Brander, for one of those giants that have immortalized the names of a Maule, a Goldie, and a Wilson. Mercy on us, Sheltie, what a beard! You cannot have been shaved since Whitsunday—and never saw we such lengthy love-locks as those dangling at your heels. But let us mount, old Surefoot—mulish in naught but an inveterate aversion to all stumbling. And now for the heather! But are you sure, gents, *that we are on?*

And has it come to this! Where is the grandson of the desert-born?

Thirty years ago, and thou Filho da Puta wert a flyer! A fencer beyond compare! Dost thou remember how, for a cool five hundred, thou clearedst thy canal in a style that rivalled that of the red-deer across the chasms of Cairngorm? All we had to do, was to hold hard and not ride over the hounds, when, running breast-high on the rear of Reynard, the savage pack wakened the welkin with the tumultuous hubbub of their death-cry, and whipper-in and huntsmen were flogging on their faltering flight in vain through fields and forests flying behind thy heels that glanced and glittered in the frosty sunshine. What steed like thee in all Britain at a steeple chase? Thy hoofs scorned the strong stubble, and skimmed the deep fallows, in which all other horses—heavy there as dragons—seemed fetlock-bound, or laboured on in staggerings, soil-sunk to the knees. Ditches dwindled beneath thy bounds, and rivulets were as rills; or if in flood they rudely overran their banks, into the spate plunged thy sixteen hands and a-half height, like a Polar monster leaping from an iceberg into the sea, and then lifting up thy small head and fine neck and high shoulder, like a Draco from the weltering waters, with a few proud pawings to which the recovered greensward rang, thy whole bold, bright-brown bulk reappeared on the bank, crested by old Christopher, and after one short

snorting pause, over the miry meadows—tanti-ty!—tanti-ty!—away! away! away!

Oh! son of a Rep! were not those glorious days? But Time has laid his finger on us both, Filho; and never more must we two be seen by the edge of the cover,

“When first the hunter’s startling horn is heard
Upon the golden hills.”

’Tis the last learned and highest lesson of Wisdom, Filho, in man’s studious obedience to Nature’s laws—to *know when to stop in his career*. Pride, Passion, Pleasure, all urge him on; while Prudence, Propriety, Peace, cry halt! halt! halt! That mandate we have timeously obeyed; and having, unblamed we hope, and blameless, carried on the pastimes of youth into manhood, and even through the prime of manhood to the verge of age—on that verge, after some few farewell vagaries up and down the debatable land, we had the resolution to drop our bridle-hand, to unloosen the spurs from our heels, and to dismount from the stateliest and swiftest steed, Filho, that ever wafted mortal man over moor and mountain like a storm-driven cloud.

You are sure *we are on*, Hamish? And that he will not run away? Come, come, Surefoot, none of your funkings! A better mane for holding on by we could not imagine. Pure Sheltie you say, Hamish? From his ears we should have suspected his grandfather of having been at least a Zebra.

FLIGHT SECOND—THE COVES OF CRUACHAN.

COMMA—semicolon—colon—full-point! All three scent-struck into attitude steady as stones. That is beautiful. Ponto straight as a rod—Piro in a slight curve—and Basta a perfect semicircle. O’Bronte! down on your marrow-bones. But there is no need, Hamish, either for hurry or haste. On such ground, and on such a day, the birds will lie as if they were asleep. Hamish, the flask!—not the powder-flask, you dotterel—but the Glenlivet. ’Tis thus we always love to steady our hand for the first shot. It gives a fine feeling to the forefinger.

Ha! the heads of the old cock and hen, like snakes, above the heather—motionless, but with glancing eyes—and preparing for the spring. Whirr—whirr—whirr—bang—bang—tapsillery—tapsalteery—thud—thud—thud! Old cock and old hen both down, Hamish. No mean omen, no awkward augury, of the day’s sport. Now for the orphan family—marked ye them round

“The swelling instep of the mountain’s foot?”

“Faith and she’s the teevil’s nainsel—that is she—at the shutin’; for may I time ma mull, and never pree sneeshin’ mair, if she hae na richt and left murdered fowre o’ the creturs!” —“Four!—why we only covered the old people; but if younkers will cross, ’tis their own fault that they bite the heather.” —“They’re a’ fowre spewin’, sir, except ane—and her’s head’s aff—and she’s jumpin’ about waur nor

ony o' them, wi' her bluidy neck. I wuss she mayna tak to her wings again, and owe the knowe. But ca' in that great toozy ootlandish dowg, sir, for he's devourin' them—see hoo he's flingin' them, first ane and then anither, outowre his shooother, and keppin' them afore they touch the grun in his mooth, like a mountebank wi' a shoor o' oranges!"—"Hamish, are they bagged?"—"Ou aye."—"Then away to windward, ye sons of bitches—Heavens, how they do their work!"

Up to the time of our grand climacteric we loved a wide range—and thought nothing of describing and discussing a circle of ten miles diameter in a day, up to our hips in heather. But for these dozen or twenty years bypast, we have preferred a narrow beat, snugly seated on a sheltry, and pad the hoof on the hill no more. Yonder is the kind of ground we now love—for why should an old man make a toil of a pleasure? 'Tis one of the many small coves belonging to Glen-Etive, and looks down from no very great elevation upon the Loch. Its bottom, and sides nearly halfway up, are green pastures, sheep-nibbled as smooth as a lawn—and a rill, dropping in diamonds from the cliffs at its upper end, betrays itself, where the water is invisible, by a line of still livelier verdure. An old dilapidated sheepfold is the only building, and seems to make the scene still more solitary. Above the green pastures are the richest beds and bosoms of heather ever bees murmured on—and above them nothing but bare cliffs. A stiff breeze is now blowing into this cove from the sea-loch; and we shall slaughter the orphan family at our leisure. 'Tis probable they have dropped—single bird after single bird—or in twos and threes—all along the first line of heather that met their flight; and if so, we shall pop them like partridges in turnips. Three points in the game! Each dog, it is manifest, stands to a different lot of feathers; and we shall slaughter them, without dismounting, *seriatim*. No, Hamish—we must dismount—give us your shoulder—that will do. The Crutch—now we are on our pins. Take a lesson. Whirr! Bang! Bag number one, Hamish. Ay, that is right, Ponto—back Basta. Ditto, ditto. Now Ponto and Basta both back Piro—right and left this time—and not one of the brood will be left to cheep of Christopher. Be ready—attend us with the other double-barrel. Whirr! Bang—bang—bang—bang! What think you of that, you son of the mist? There is a shower of feathers! They are all at sixes and sevens upon the greensward at the edge of the heather. Seven birds at four shots! The whole family is now disposed of—father, mother, and eleven children. If such fire still be in the dry wood, what must it have been in the green? Let us lie down in the sheltered shade of the mossy walls of the sheepfold—take a drop of Glenlivet—and philosophize.

Hollo! Hamish, who are these strange, suspicious-looking strangers thitherwards-bound, as hallan-shaker a set as may be seen on an August day? Ay, ay, we ken the clan. A week's residence to a man of gumption gives an insight into a neighbourhood. Unerring

physiognomists and phrenologists are we, and what with instinctive, and what with intuitive knowledge, we keek in a moment through all disguise. He in the centre of the group is the stickit minister—on his right stands the drunken dominie—on his left the captain, who in that raised look retains token of *delirium tremens*—the land-louper behind him is the land-measurer, who would be well to do in the world were he "monarch of all he surveyed,"—but has been long out at elbows, and his society not much courted since he was rude to the auld wife at the time the gudeman was at the peats. That fine tall youth, the widow's son in Gleno, and his friend the Sketcher, with his portfolio under his arm, are in indifferent company, Hamish; but who, pray, may be the phenomenon in plush, with bow and arrow, and tasseled horn, bonnet jauntily screwed to the sinister, glass stuck in socket, and precisely in the middle of his puckered mouth a cigar. You do not say so—a grocer's apprentice from the Gorbals!

No need of confabulating there, gemmen, on the knowe—come forward and confront Christopher North. We find we have been too severe in our strictures. After all, they are not a bad set of fellows, as the world goes—imprudence must not be too harshly condemned—Shakspeare taught us to see the soul of good in things evil—these two are excellent lads; and, as for impertinence, it often proceeds from *mauvais honte*, and with a glance we shall replace the archer behind his counter.

How goes it, Cappy? Rather stiff in the back, minister, with the mouth of the fowling-piece peeping out between the tails of your long coat, and the butt at the back of your head, by way of bolster? You will find it more comfortable to have her in hand. That bamboo, dominie, is well known to be an air-gun. Have you your horse-pistol with you to-day, surveyor? Sagittarius, think you, you could hit, at twoscore, a haystack flying? Sit down, gentlemen, and let's have a crack.

So ho! so ho! so ho! We see her black eyes beneath a primrose tuft on the brae. In spring all one bank of blossoms; but 'tis barish now and sheep-nibbled, though few eyes but our own could have thus detected there the brown back of Mawkin. Dominie, your Bamboo. Shoot her sitting? Fie fie—no, no. Kick her up, Hamish. There she goes. We are out of practice at single ball—but whizz! she has it between the shoulders. Head over heels she has started an other—why, that's funny—give us your bow and arrow you green grocer—twang! within an inch of her fud. Gentlemen, suppose we tip you a song. Join all in the chorus.

THE POWCHER'S SONG.

When I was boon apprentice
In vamous Zoomerzet Shere,
Lauks! I zerved ny meester truly

Vor neerly zeven year,
Until I took to Ponching,
Az you zhall quickly heer.

Cho. Ou! 'twas ma deylight in a shiny night,
In the zeason of the year:
Ou! 'twas ma deylight in a shiny night,
In the zeason of the year.

Az me and ma coomerades
Were zetting on a snere,

Lauks! the Geamkeepoors caem oop to uz;
 Vor them we did na kere,
 'Case we could fight or wrestle, lads,
 Jump over ony where.

Cho. Ou! 'twas ma delygth in a shiny night,
 In the zeazon of the year:
 Ou! 'twas ma delygth in a shiny night,
 In the zeazon of the year.

Az we went oot wan morning
 Atwixt your vive and zeex,
 We caught a heere alive, ma lads,
 We found un in a deetch;
 We popt un in a bag, ma lads,
 We yoiten off vor town,
 We took un to a neeghoor's hoose,
 And we zold un vor a crown.
 We zold un vor a crown, ma lads,
 But a wont tell ye where.

Cho. Ou! 'twas ma delygth in a shiny night,
 In the zeazon of the year:
 Ou! 'twas ma delygth in a shiny night,
 In the zeazon of the year.

Then here's success to Powching,
 Vor A doos think it feere,
 And here's look to ere a gentleman
 Az wants to buy a heere,
 And here's to ere a geamkeepoor,
 Az woona zell it deere.

Cho. Ou! 'twas ma delygth in a shiny night,
 In the zeazon of the year:
 Ou! 'twas ma delygth in a shiny night,
 In the zeazon of the year.

The Presbytery might have overlooked your fault, Mac, for the case was not a flagrant one, and you were willing, we understand, to make her an honest woman. Do you think you could recollect one of your sermons? In action and in unction you had not your superior in the Synod. Do give us a screed about Nimrod or Nebuchadnezzar. No desecration in a sermon—better omitted, we grant, prayer and psalm. Should you be unable to reproduce an entire discourse, yet by dovetailing—that is, a bit from one and a bit from another—surely you can be at no loss for half an hour's miscellaneous matter—heads and tails. Or suppose we let you off with a View of the Church Question. You look glum and shake your head. Can you, Mac, how can you resist that Pulpit?

Behold in that semicircular low-browed cliff, backed by a range of bonny green braes dipping down from the hills that do themselves come shelving from the mountains, what appears at first sight to be a cave, but is merely a blind window, as it were, a few feet deep, arched and faced like a beautiful work of masonry, though chisel never touched it, nor man's hand dropped the line along the living stone thus wrought by nature's self, who often shows us, in her mysterious processes, resemblances of effects produced by us her children on the same materials by our more most elaborate art. It is a very pulpit, and that projecting slab is the sounding-board. That upright stone in front of it, without the aid of fancy, may well be thought the desk. To us sitting here, this spot of greensward is the floor; the sky that hangs low, as if it loved it, the roof of the sanctuary; nor is there any harm in saying, that we, if we choose to think so, are sitting in a kirk.

Shall we mount the pulpit by that natural flight of steps, and, like a Sedgwick or a Buckland, with a specimen in one hand, and before our eyes mountains whose faces the scars of thunder have intrenched, tell you how the globe, after formation on formation, became

fit residence for new-created man, and habitable no more to flying dragons? Or shall we, rather, taking the globe as we find it, speculate on the changes wrought on its surface by us, whom God gave feet to tread the earth, and faces to behold the heavens, and souls to soar into the heaven of heavens, on the wings of hope, aspiring through temporal shades to eternal light?

Brethren!—The primary physical wants of the human being are food, clothing, shelter, and defence. To supply these he has invented all his arts. Hunger and thirst cultivate the earth. Fear builds castles and embattles cities. The animal is clothed by nature against cold and storm, and shelters himself in his den. Man builds his habitation, and weaves his clothing. With horns, or teeth, or claws, the strong and deadly weapons with which nature has furnished them, the animal kinds wage their war; he forges swords and spears, and constructs implements of destruction that will send death almost as far as his eye can mark his foe, and sweep down thousands together. The animal that goes in quest of his food, that pursues or flies from his enemy, has feet, or wings, or fins; but man bids the horse, the camel, the elephant, bear him, and yokes them to his chariot. If the strong animal would cross the river, he swims. Man spans it with a bridge. But the most powerful of them all stands on the beach and gazes on the ocean. Man constructs a ship, and encircles the globe. Other creatures must traverse the element nature has assigned, with means she has furnished. He chooses his element, and makes his means. Can the fish traverse the waters? So can he. Can the bird fly the air? So can he. Can the camel speed over the desert? He shall bear man as his rider.

"That's beautiful!" "Tuts, haud your tongue, and tak a chow. There's some shag." "Is he gaun' to be lang, Hamish?" "Wheesh! you micht as weel be speaking in the kirk."

But to see what he owes to inventive art, we should compare man, not with inferior creatures, but with himself, looking over the face of human society, as history or observation shows it. We shall find him almost sharing the life of brutes, or removed from them by innumerable differences, and incalculable degrees. In one place we see him harbouring in caves, naked, living, we might almost say, on prey, seeking from chance his wretched sustenance, food which he eats just as he finds it. He lives like a beggar on the alms of nature. Turn to another land, and you see the face of the earth covered with the works of his hand—his habitation, wide-spreading stately cities—his clothing and the ornaments of his person culled and fashioned from the three kingdoms of nature. For his food the face of the earth bears him tribute; and the seasons and changes of heaven concur with his own art in ministering to his board. This is the difference which man has made in his own condition by the use of his intellectual powers, awakened and goaded on by the necessities of his physical constitution.

The various knowledge, the endlessly multiplied observation, the experience and reason—

ings of man added to man, of generation following generation, which were required to bring to a moderate state of advancement the great primary arts subservient to physical life—the arts of providing food, habitation, clothing, and defence, *we* are utterly unable to conceive. We are *born* to the knowledge, which was collected by the labours of many ages. How slowly were those arts reared up which still remain to us! How many which had laboriously been brought to perfection, have been displaced by superior invention, and fallen into oblivion! Fenced in as we are by the works of our predecessors, we see but a small part of the power of man contending with the difficulties of his lot. But what a wonderful scene would be opened before our eyes, with what intense interest should we look on, if we could indeed behold him armed only with his own implanted powers, and going forth to conquer the creation! If we could see him beginning by subduing evils, and supplying painful wants—going on to turn those evils and wants into the means of enjoyment—and at length, in the wantonness and pride of his power, filling his existence with luxuries;—if we could see him from his first step, in the untamed though fruitful wilderness, advancing to subdue the soil, to tame and multiply the herds—from bending the branches into a bower, to fell the forest and quarry the rock—seizing into his own hands the element of fire, directing its action on substances got from the bowels of the earth—fashioning wood, and stone, and metal, to the will of his thought—searching the nature of plants to spin their fibres, or with their virtues to heal their diseases;—if we could see him raise his first cities, launch his first ship, calling the winds and waters to be his servants, and to do his work—changing the face of the earth—forming lakes and rivers—joining seas, or stretching the continent itself into the dominion of the sea;—if we could do all this in imagination, then should we understand something of what man's intellect has done for his physical life, and what the necessities of his physical life have done in forcing into action all the powers of his intelligence.

But there are still higher considerations arising from the influence of man's physical necessities on the destiny of the species. It is this subjugation of natural evil, and this created dominion of art, that prepares the earth to be the scene of his social existence. His hard conquest was not the end of his toil. He has conquered the kingdom in which he was to dwell in his state. The full unfolding of his moral powers was only possible in those states of society which are thus brought into being by his conflict with all his physical faculties against all the stubborn powers of the material universe; for out of the same conquest Wealth is created. In this progress, and by means thus brought into action, society is divided into classes. Property itself, the allotment of the earth, takes place, because it is the bosom of the earth that yields food. That great foundation of the stability of communities is thus connected with the same necessity; and in the same progress, and out of the same causes,

arise the first great Laws by which society is held together in order. Thus that whole wonderful development of the Moral Nature of man, in all those various forms which fill up the history of the race, in part arises out of, and is always intimately blended with, the labours to which he has been aroused by these first great necessities of his physical nature. But had the tendency to increase his numbers been out of all proportion to the means provided by nature, and infinitely multipliable by art, for the subsistence of human beings, how could this magnificent march have moved on!

Hence we may understand on what ground the ancient nations revered so highly, and even deified the authors of the primary arts of life. They considered not the supply of the animal wants merely; but they contemplated that mighty change in the condition of mankind to which these arts have given origin. It is on this ground, that they had raised the character of human life, that Virgil assigns them their place in the dwellings of bliss, among devoted patriots and holy priests, among those whom song or prophecy had inspired, among those benefactors of the race whose names were to live for ever, giving his own most beautiful expression to the common sentiment of mankind.

*"Hic manus ob patriam pugnando vulnere passi,
Quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat,
Quique pii vates, et Phœbo digna locuti,
Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes,
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo;
Omnibus his niveâ cinguntur tempora vittâ."*

"That's Latin for the minister and the domine." "Wheesh! Heard you ever the like o' that? Though I dinna understaun a word o't, it gars me a' grue." "Wheesh! wheesh!—we maun pit him intil Paurliament!"—"Rather intil the General Assembly, to tussle wi' the wild men." "He's nae Moderate, man; and gin I'm no sair mistaen, he's a wild man himsel, and wair uphaud the Veto." "Wheesh! wheesh! wheesh!"

True, that in savage life men starve. But is that any proof that nature has cursed the race with a fatal tendency to multiply beyond the means of subsistence? None whatever. Attend for a little to this point. Of the real power of the bodily appetites for food, and the sway they may attain over the moral nature of the mind, we, who are protected by our place among the arrangements of civil society from greatly suffering under it, can indeed form no adequate conception. Let us not now speak of those dreadful enormities which, in the midst of dismal famine, are recorded to have been perpetrated by civilized men, when the whole moral soul, with all its strongest affections and instinctive abhorrences, has sunk prostrate under the force of that animal suffering. But the power of which we speak, as attained by this animal feeling, subsists habitually among whole tribes and nations. It is that power which it acquires over the mind of the savage, who is frequently exposed to suffer its severity, and who hunts for himself the food with which he is to appease it. Compare the mind of the human being as you are accustomed to behold him, knowing the return of this sensation only as a grateful incitement

to take the ready nourishment which is spread for his repast, with that of his fellow-man bearing through the lonely woods the gnawing pang that goads him to his prey. Hunger is in his heart; hunger bears along his un-fatiguing feet; hunger lies in the strength of his arm; hunger watches in his eye; hunger listens in his ear; as he couches down in his covert, silently waiting the approach of his expected spoil, this is the sole thought that fills his aching breast—"I shall satisfy my hunger!" When his deadly aim has brought his victim to the ground, this is the thought that springs up as he rushes to seize it, "I have got food for my hungry soul!" What must be the usurpation of animal nature here over the whole man! It is not merely the simple pain as if it were the forlornness of a human creature bearing about his famishing existence in helplessness and despair—though that, too, is indeed a true picture of some states of our race; but here is not a suffering and sinking wretch—he is a strong hunter, and puts forth his strength fiercely under the urgency of this passion. All his might in the chase, all pride of speed, and strength, and skill—all thoughts of long and hard endurance—all images of perils past—all remembrances and all foresight—are gathered on that one strong and keen desire—are bound down to the sense of that one bitter animal want. These feelings recurring day by day in the sole toil of his life, bring upon his soul a vehemence and power of desire in this object, of which we can have no conception, till he becomes subjected to hunger as to a mighty animal passion—a passion such as it rages in those fierce animal kinds which it drives with such ferocity on their prey. He knows hunger as the wolf knows it—he goes forth with his burning heart, like the tiger to lap blood. But turn to man in another condition to which he has been brought by the very agency of his physical on his intellectual and moral being! How far removed is he now from that daily contention with such evils as these! How much does he feel himself assured against them by belonging to the great confederacy of social life! How much is it veiled from his eyes by the many artificial circumstances in which the satisfaction of the want is involved! The work in which he labours the whole day—on which his eyes are fixed and his hands toil—is something altogether unconnected with his own wants—connected with distant wants and purposes of a thousand other men in which he has no participation. And as far as it is a work of skill, he has to fix his mind on objects and purposes so totally removed from himself, that they all tend still more to sever his thoughts from his own necessities: and thus it is that civilization raises his moral character, when it protects almost every human being in a country from that subjection to this passion, to which even noble tribes are bound down in the wildernesses of nature.

"It's an awful thing hunger, Hamish, sure aneugh; but I wush he was dune; for that vice o' his sing-singing is makin' me unco sleepy—and ance I fa' owre, I'm no easy waukenin'. But wha's that snorrin'!"

Yet it is the most melancholy part of all such speculation, to observe what a wide gloom is cast over them by this severe necessity, which is nevertheless the great and constant cause of the improvement of their condition. It is not suffering alone—for that they may be injured to bear,—but the darkness of the understanding, and the darkness of the heart, which comes on under the oppression of toil, that is miserable to see. Our fellow-men, born with the same spirit as ourselves, seem yet denied the common privileges of that spirit. They seem to bring faculties into the world that cannot be unfolded, and powers of affection and desire which not their fault but the lot of their birth will pervert and degrade. There is a humiliation laid upon our nature in the doom which seems thus to rest upon a great portion of our species, which, while it requires our most considerate compassion for those who are thus depressed, compels us to humble ourselves under the sense of our own participation in the nature from which it flows. Therefore, in estimating the worth, the virtue of our fellow men, whom Providence has placed in a lot that yields to them the means, and little more than the means, of supporting life in themselves and those born of them, let us never forget how intimate is the necessary union between the wants of the body and the thoughts of the soul. Let us remember, that over a great portion of humanity, the soul is in a struggle for its independence and power with the necessities of that nature in which it is enveloped. It has to support itself against sickening, or irritating, or maddening thoughts inspired by weariness, lassitude, want, or the fear of want. It is chained down to the earth by the influence of one great and constant occupation—that of providing the means of its mortal existence. When it shows itself shook and agitated, or overcome in the struggle, what ought to be the thoughts and feelings of the wise for poor humanity! When, on the other hand, we see nature preserving itself pure, bold, and happy amidst the perpetual threatenings or assaults of those evils from which it cannot fly, and though oppressed by its own weary wants, forgetting them all in that love which ministers to the wants of others—when we see the brow wrinkled and drenched by incessant toil, the body in the power of its prime bowed down to the dust, and the whole frame in which the immortal spirit abides marked, but not dishonoured, by its slavery to fate—and when, in the midst of all this ceaseless depression and oppression, from which man must never hope to escape on earth, we see him still seeking and still finding joy, delight, and happiness in the finer affections of his spiritual being, giving to the lips of those he loves the scanty morsel earned by his own hungry and thirsty toil, purchasing by sweat, sickness, and fever, Education and Instruction and Religion to the young creatures who delight him who is starving for their sakes, resting with gratitude on that day, whose return is ever like a fresh fountain to his exhausted and weary heart, and preserving a profound and high sense of his own immortality among all the earth-born toils and

troubles that would in vain chain him down to the dust,—when we see all this, and think of all this, we feel indeed how rich may be the poorest of the poor, and learn to respect the moral being of man in its triumphs over the power of his physical nature. But we do not learn to doubt or deny the wisdom of the Creator. We do not learn from all the struggles, and all these defeats, and all these victories, and all these triumphs, that God sent us his creatures into this life to starve, because the air, the earth, and the waters have not wherewithal to feed the mouths that gape for food through all the elements! Nor do we learn that want is a crime, and poverty a sin—and that they who *would* toil, but cannot, and they who *can* toil, but have no work set before them, are intruders at Nature's table, and must be driven by those who are able to pay for their seats to famine, starvation, and death—almost denied a burial!—Finis. Amen.

Often has it been our lot, by our conversational powers, to set the table on a snore. The more stirring the theme, the more soporific the sound of our silver voice. Look there, we beseech you! In a small spot of "stationary sunshine," lie Hamish, and Surefoot, and O'Bronte, and Ponto, and Piro, and Basta, all sound asleep! Dogs are troubled sleepers—but these four are now like the dreamless dead. Horses, too, seem often to be witch-ridden in their sleep. But at this moment Surefoot is stretched more like a stone than a sheltly in the land of Nod. As for Hamish, were he to lie so braxy-like by himself on the hill, he would be awakened by the bill of the raven digging into his sockets. We are Morpheus and Orpheus in one incarnation—the very Pink of Poppy—the true spirit of Opium—of Laudanum the concentrated Essence—of the black Drop the Gnome.

Indeed, gentlemen, you have reason to be ashamed of yourselves—but where is the awkward squad? Clean gone. They have stolen a march on us, and while we have been preaching they have been poaching—sans mandate of the Marquis and Monzie. We may catch them ere close of day; and, if they have a smell of slaughter, we shall crack their sconces with our crutch. No apologies, Hamish—'tis only making the matter worse; but we expected better things of the dogs. O'Bronte! fie! fie! sirrah. Your sire would not have fallen asleep during a speech of ours—and such a speech!—he would have sat it out without winking—at each more splendid passage testifying his delight by a yowl. Leap over the Crutch, you reprobate, and let us see thee scour. Look at him, Hamish, already beckoning to us on his hurdis from the hill-top. Let us scale those barriers—and away over the table-land between that summit and the head of Gleno. No sooner said than done, and here we are on the level—such a level as the ship finds on the main sea, when in the storm-lull she rides up and down the green swell, before the tradewinds that cool the tropics. The surface of this main land-sea is black in the gloom, and green in the glimmer, and purple in the light, and crimson in the sunshine. Oh, never 'locks nature so magnificent

"As in this varying and uncertain weather,
When gloom and glory force themselves together,
When calm seems stormy, and tempestuous night
At day's meridian lowers like noon of night!"

Whose are these fine lines? Hooky Walker, OUR OWN. Dogs! Down—down—down—be stonelike, O Sheltly!—and Hamish, sink thou into the heather like a lizard; for if these old dim eyes of ours may be in aught believed, yonder by the birches stands a Red-Deer snuffing the east wind! Hush! hush! hush! He suspects an enemy in that air—but death comes upon him with stealthy foot, from the west; and if Apollo and Diana—the divinities we so long have worshipped—be now propitious—his antlers shall be entangled in the heather, and his hoofs beat the heavens. Hamish, the rifle! A tinkle as of iron, and a hiss accompanying the explosion—and the King of the Wilderness, bounding up into the air with his antlers higher than ever waved chieftain's plume, falls down stone-dead where he stood; for the blue-pill has gone through his vitals, and lightning itself could hardly have withered him into more instantaneous cessation of life!

He is an enormous animal. What antlers! Roll him over, Hamish, on his side! See, up to our breast, nearly, reaches the topmost branch. He is what the hunter of old called a "Stag of Ten." His eye has lost the flash of freedom—the tongue that browsed the brushwood is bitten through by the clenched teeth—the fleetness of his feet has felt that fatal frost—the wild heart is hushed, Hamish,—tame, tame, tame; and there the Monarch of the Mountains—the King of the Cliffs—the Grand Lama of the Glens—the Sultan of the Solitudes—the Dey of the Deserts—the Royal Ranger of the Woods and Forests—yea, the very Prince of the Air and Thane of Thunder—"shorn of all his beams," lies motionless as a dead Jackass by the wayside, whose hide was not thought worth the trouble of flaying by his owners the gipsies! "To this complexion has he come at last!"—he who at dawn had borrowed the wings of the wind to carry him across the cataracts!

A sudden pang shoots across our heart. What right had we to commit this murder! How, henceforth, shall we dare to hold up our head among the lovers of liberty, after having thus stolen basely from behind on him the boldest, brightest, and most beautiful of all her sons! We who for so many years have been just able to hobble, and no more, by the aid of the Crutch—who feared to let the heather-bent touch our toe, so sensitive in its gout—We, the old and impotent, all last winter bed-ridden, and even now seated like a lameter on a sheltly, strapped by a patent buckle to a saddle provided with a pummel behind as well as before—such an unwieldy and weary wretch as We—"fat, and scant of breath"—and with our hand almost perpetually pressed against our left side, when a coughing-fit of asthma brings back the stitch, seldom an absentee—to assassinate THAT RED-DEER, whose flight on earth could accompany the eagle's in heaven; and not only to assassinate him, but, in a moral vein, to liken his carcass to that of a Jackass! It will not bear further reflection; so, Hamish,

out with your whinger, and carve him a dish fit for the gods—in a style worthy of Sir Tristrem, Gil Morice, Robin Hood, or Lord Rannald. No; let him lie till nightfall, when we shall be returning from Inveraw with strength sufficient to bear him to the Tent.

But hark, Hamish, to that sullen croak from the cliff! The old raven of the cove already scents death—

“Sagacious of his quarry from afar!”

But where art thou, Hamish! Ay, yonder is Hamish, wriggling on his very belly, like an adder, through the heather to windward of the croaker, whose nostrils, and eyes, and bill, are now all hungrily fascinated, and as it were already fastened into the very bowels of the beast. His days are numbered. That sly serpent, by circuitous windings insinuating his limber length through among all obstructions, has ascended unseen the drooping shoulder of the cliff, and now cautiously erects his crest within a hundred yards or more of the unsuspecting savage, still uttering at intervals his sullen croak, croak, croak! Something crumbles, and old Sooty, unfolding his huge wings, lifts himself up like Satan, about to sail away for a while into another glen; but the rifle rings among the rocks—the lead has broken his spine—and look! how the demon, head over heels, goes tumbling down, down, many hundred fathoms, dashed to pieces and impaled on the sharp-pointed granite! Ere nightfall the bloody fragments will be devoured by his mate. Nothing now will disturb the carcass of the deer. No corbies dare enter the cove where the raven reigned; the hawk prefers grouse to venison, and so does the eagle, who, however, like a good Catholic as he is—this is Friday—has gone out to sea for a fish dinner, which he devours to the music of the waves on some isle-rock. Therefore lie there, dethroned king! till thou art decapitated; and ere the moon wanes, that haunch will tower gloriously on our Tent-table at the Feast of Shells.

What is your private opinion, O’Bronte, of the taste of Red-deer blood! Has it not a wild twang on the tongue and palate, far preferable to sheep’s-head? You are absolutely undergoing transfiguration into a deer-hound! With your fore-paws on the flank, your tail brandished like a standard, and your crimson flews (thank you, Shepherd, for that word) licked by a long lambent tongue red as crimson, while your eyes express a fierce delight never felt before, and a stifled growl disturbs the star on your breast—just as you stand now, O’Bronte, might Edwin Landseer rejoice to paint thy picture, for which, immortal image of the wilderness, the Duke of Bedford would not scruple to give a draft on his banker for one thousand pounds!

Shooting grouse after red-deer is, for a while at first, felt to be like writing an anagram in a lady’s album, after having given the finishing touch to a tragedy or an epic poem. ’Tis like taking to catching shrimps in the sand with one’s toes, on one’s return from Davis’ Straits in a whaler that arrived at Peterhead with sixteen fish, each calculated at ten ton of oil.

Yet, ’tis strange how the human soul can descend, pleasantly at every note, from the top to the bottom of passion’s and imagination’s gamut.

A Tarn—a Tarn! with but a small circle of unbroken water in the centre, and all the rest of its shallowness bristling, in every bay, with reeds and rushes, and surrounded, all about the mossy flat, with marshes and quagmires! What a breeding-place—“procreant cradle” for water fowl! Now comes thy turn, O’Bronte—for famous is thy name, almost as thy sire’s, among the flappers. Crawl down to leeward, Hamish, that you may pepper them—should they take to flight overhead to the loch. Sure-foot, taste that greensward, and you will find it sweet and succulent. Dogs, heel—heel!—and now let us steal, on our Crutch, behind that knoll, and open a sudden fire on the swimmers, who seem to think themselves out of shot at the edge of that line of water-lilies; but some of them will soon find themselves mistaken, whirling round on their backs, and vainly endeavouring to dive after their friends that disappear beneath the agitated surface shot-swept into spray. Long Gun! who oft to the forefinger of Colonel Hawker has swept the night-harbour of Poole all alive with widgeons, be true to the trust now reposed in thee by Kit North! And though these be neither geese, nor swans, nor hoopoes, yet, send thy leaden shower among them feeding in their play, till all the air be afloat with specks, as if at the shaking of a feather-bed that had burst the ticking, and the tarn covered with sprawling mawsies and mallards, in death-throes among the ducklings! There it lies on its rest—like a telescope. No eye has discovered the invention—keen as those wild eyes are of the plowterers on the shallows. Lightning and thunder! to which all the echoes roar. But we meanwhile are on our back; for of all the recoils that ever shook a shoulder, that one was the severest—but ’twill probably cure our rheumatism and—Well done—nobly, gloriously done, O’Bronte! Heaven and earth, how otter-like he swims! Ha, Hamish! you have cut off the retreat of that airy voyager—you have given it him in his stern, Hamish—and are reloading for the flappers. One at a time in your mouth, O’Bronte! Put about with that tail for a rudder—and make for the shore. What a stately creature! as he comes issuing from the shallows, and, bearing the old mallard breast high, walks all dripping along the greensward, and then shakes from his curled ebony the flashing spray-mist. He gives us one look as we crown the knoll, and then in again with a spang and a plunge far into the tarn, caring no more for the reeds than for so many winlestraes, and, fast as a sea-serpent, is among the heart of the killed and wounded. In unerring instinct he always seizes the dead—and now a devil’s dozen lie along the shore. Come hither, O’Bronte, and caress thy old master. Ay—that showed a fine feeling—did that long shake that bedrizzled the sunshine. Put thy paws over our shoulders, and round our neck, true son of thy sire—oh! that he were but alive, to see and share thy achievements; but indeed, two such dogs,

living together in their prime at one era, would have been too great glory for this sublunary canine world. Therefore Sirius looked on thy sire with an evil eye, and in jealousy—

"*Tantane animis celestibus iræ !*"

growled upon some sinner to poison the Dog of all Dogs, who leapt up almost to the ceiling of the room where he slept—our own bed-room—under the agony of that accursed arsenic, gave one horrid howl, and expired. Methinks we know his murderer—his eye falls when it meets ours on the Street of Princes; and let him scowl there but seldom—for though 'tis but suspicion, this fist, O'Bronte, doubles at the sight of the miscreant—and some day, impelled by wrath and disgust, it will smash his nose flat with the other features, till his face is a pancake. Yea! as sure as Themis holds her balance in the skies, shall the poisoner be punished out of all recognition by his parents, and be disowned by the Irish Cockney father that begot him, and the Scotch Cockney mother that bore him, as he carries home a tripe-like countenance enough to make his paramour the scullion miscarry, as she opens the door to him on the fifth flat of a common stair. But we are getting personal, O'Bronte, a vice abhorrent from our nature.

There goes our Crutch, Hamish, whirling aloft in the sky a rainbow flight, even like the ten-pound hammer from the fling of George Scougal at the St. Ronan's games. Our gout is gone—so is our asthma—eke our rheumatism—and, like an eagle, we have renewed our youth. There is hop, step, and jump, for you, Hamish—we should not fear, young and agile as you are, buck, to give you a yard. But now for the flappers. Pointers all, stir your stumps and into the water. This is rich. Why, the reeds are as full of flappers as of frogs. If they can fly, the fools don't know it. Why, there is a whole musquito-fleet of yellow boys, not a month old. What a prolific old lady must she have been, to have kept on breeding till July. There she sits, cowering, just on the edge of the reeds, uncertain whether to dive or fly. By the creak and cry of the cradle of thy first-born, Hamish, spare the plumage on her yearning and quaking breast. The little yellow images have all melted away, and are now, in holy cunning of instinct, deep down beneath the waters, shifting for themselves among the very mud at the bottom of the reeds. By and by they will be floating with but the points of their bills above the surface, invisible among the air-bells. The parent duck has also disappeared; the drake you disposed of, Hamish, as the coward was lifting up his lumbering body, with fat doup and long neck in the air, to seek safer skies. We male creatures—drakes, ganders, and men alike—what are we, when affection pleads, in comparison with females! In our passions, we are brave, but these satiated, we turn upon our heel and disappear from danger, like dastards. But doves, and ducks, and women, are fearless in affection, to the very death. Therefore have we all our days, sleeping or waking, loved the sex, virgin and matron, nor would we hurt a hair of their heads, gray or golden, for all else that shines beneath the sun.

Not the best practice this in the world, certainly, for pointers—and it may teach them bad habits on the hill; but, in some situations, all dogs and all men are alike, and cross them as you will, not a breed but shows a taint of original sin, when under a temptation sufficiently strong to bring it out. Ponto, Piro, and Basta, are now, according to their abilities, all as bad as O'Bronte—and never, to be sure, was there such a worrying in this wicked world. But now we shall cease our fire, and leave the few flappers that are left alive to their own meditations. Our conduct for the last hour must have seemed to them no less unaccountable than alarming; and something to quack over during the rest of the season. Well, we do not remember ever to have seen a prettier pile of ducks and ducklings. Hamish, take census. What do you say—two score? That beats cockfighting. Here's a hank of twine, Hamish, tie them all together by the legs, and hang them, in two divisions of equal weights, over the crupper of Surefoot.

FLIGHT THIRD—STILL LIFE.

WE have been sufficiently slaughterous for a man of our fine sensibilities and moderate desires, Hamish; and as, somehow or other, the scent seems to be beginning not to lie well—yet the air cannot be said to be close and sultry either—we shall let Brown Bess cool herself in both barrels—relinquish, for an hour or so, our seat on Shelly, and, by way of a change, pad the hoof up that smooth ascent, strangely left stoneless—an avenue positively looking as if it were artificial, as it stretches away, with its beautiful green undulations, among the blocks; for though no view-hunter, we are, Hamish, what in fine language is called a devout worshipper of Nature, an enthusiast in the sublime; and if Nature do not show us something worth gazing at when we reach yonder altitudes, she must be a gray deceiver, and we shall never again kneel at her footstool, or sing a hymn in her praise.

The truth is, we have a rending headache, for Bess has been for some hours on the kick, and Surefoot on the jog, and our exertions in the pulpit were severe—action, Hamish, action, action, being, as Demosthenes said some two or three thousand years ago, essential to oratory; and you observed how nimbly we kept changing legs, Hamish, how strenuously brandishing arms, throughout our discourse—saving the cunning pauses, thou simpleton, when, by way of relief to our auditors, we were as gentle as sucking-doves, and folded up our wings as if about to go to roost, whereas we were but meditating a bolder flight—about to soar, Hamish, into the empyrean. Over and above all that, we could not brook Tickler's insolence, who, about the sma' hours, challenged us, you know, quech for quech; and though we gave him a fair back-fall, yet we suffered in the tulzie, and there is at this moment a throbbing in our temples that threatens a regular brain-fever. We burn for an air-bath on the mountain-top. Moreover, we are

seized with a sudden desire for solitude—to be plain, we are getting sulky; so ascend, Sure-foot, Hamish, and be off with the pointers—O'Bronte goes with us—north-west, making a circumambulus round the *Tomhans*, where Mhairhe M'Intyre lived seven years with the fairies; and in a couple of hours or so, you will find us under the Merlin Crag.

We offer to walk any man of our age in Great Britain. But what is our age? Confound us if we know within a score or two. Yet we cannot get rid of the impression that we are under ninety. However, as we seek no advantage, and give no odds, we challenge the octogenarians of the United Kingdom—fair toe and heel—a twelve-hour match—for love, fame, and a legitimate exchequer bill for a thousand. Why these calves of ours would look queer, we confess, on the legs of a Leith porter; but even in our prime they were none of your big vulgar calves, but they handled like iron—now more like butter. There is still a spring in our instep; and our knees, sometimes shaky, are to-day knit as Pan's and neat as Apollo's. Poet we may not be, but Pedestrian we are; with Wordsworth we could not walk along imaginative heights, but, if not grievously out of our reckoning, on the turnpike road we could keep pace with Captain Barclay for a short distance—say from Dundee to Aberdeen.

Oh! Gemini! but we are in high spirits. Yes—delights there indeed are, which none but pedestrians know. Much—all depends on the character of the wanderer; he must have known what it is to commune with his own thoughts and feelings, and be satisfied with them even as with the converse of a chosen friend. Not that he must always, in the solitudes that await him, be in a meditative mood, for ideas and emotions will of themselves arise, and he will only have to enjoy the pleasures which his own being spontaneously affords. It would indeed be a hopeless thing, if we were always to be on the stretch for happiness. Intellect, Imagination, and Feeling, all work of their own free-will, and not at the order of any taskmaster. A rill soon becomes a stream—a stream a river—a river a loch—and a loch a sea. So it is with the current within the spirit. It carries us along, without either oar or sail, increasing in lepth, breadth, and swiftness, yet all the while the easy work of our own wonderful minds. While we seem only to see or hear, we are thinking and feeling far beyond the mere notices given by the senses; and years afterwards we find that we have been laying up treasures, in our most heedless moments, of imagery, and connecting together trains of thought that arise in startling beauty, almost without cause or any traceable origin. The Pedestrian, too, must not only love his own society, but the society of any other human beings, if blameless and not impure, among whom his lot may for a short season be cast. He must rejoice in all the forms and shows of life, however simple they may be, however humble, however low; and be able to find food for his thoughts beside the ingle of the loneliest hut, where the inmates sit with few words, and will rather be spoken to than

speak to the stranger. In such places he will be delighted—perhaps surprised—to find in uncorrupted strength all the primary elements of human character. He will find that his knowledge may be wider than theirs, and better ordered, but that it rests on the same foundation, and comprehends the same matter. There will be no want of sympathies between him and them; and what he knows best, and loves most, will seldom fail to be that also which they listen to with greatest interest, and respecting which there is the closest communion between the minds of stranger and host. He may know the course of the stars according to the revelation of science—they may have studied them only as simple shepherds, “whose hearts were gladdened” walking on the mountain-top. But they know—as he does—who sowed the stars in heaven, and that their silent courses are all adjusted by the hand of the Most High.

Oh! blessed, thrice blessed years of youth! would we choose to live over again all your forgotten and unremembered nights and days! Blessed, thrice blessed we call you, although, as we then felt, often darkened almost into insanity by self-sown sorrows springing out of our restless soul. No, we would not again face such troubles, not even for the glorious apparitions that familiarly haunted us in glens and forests, on mountains and on the great sea. But all, or nearly all that did once so grievously disturb, we can lay in the depths of the past, so that scarcely a ghastly voice is heard, a ghastly face beheld; while all that so charmed of yore, or nearly all, although no longer the daily companions of our life, still survive to be recalled at solemn hours, and with a “beauty still more beauteous” to reinvest the earth, which neither sin nor sorrow can rob of its enchantments. We can still travel with the solitary mountain-stream from its source to the sea, and see new visions at every vista of its winding waters. The waterfall flows not with its own monotonous voice of a day or an hour, but like a choral anthem pealing with the hymns of many years. In the heart of the blind mist on the mountain-ranges we can now sit alone, surrounded by a world of images, over which time holds no power but to consecrate or solemnize. Solitude we can deepen by a single volition, and by a single volition let in upon it the stir and noise of the world and life. Why, therefore, should we complain, or whylament the inevitable loss or change that time brings with it to all that breathe? Beneath the shadow of the tree we can yet repose, and tranquillize our spirit by its rustle, or by the “green light” unchequered by one stirring leaf. From sunrise to sunset, we can lie below the old mossy tower, till the darkness that shuts out the day, hides not the visions that glide round the ruined battlements. Cheerful as in a city can we traverse the houseless moor; and although not a ship be on the sea, we can set sail on the wings of imagination, and when wearied, sink down on savage or serene isle, and let drop our anchor below the moon and stars.

And 'tis well we are so spiritual; for the senses are of no use here, and we must draw

for amusement on our internal sources. A day-like night we have often seen about mid-summer, serenest of all among the Hebrides; but a night-like day, such as this, ne'er before fell on us, and we might as well be in the Heart o' Mid-Lothian. 'Tis a dungeon, and a dark one—and we know not for what crime we have been condemned to solitary confinement. Were it mere mist we should not mind; but the gloom is palpable—and makes resistance to the hand. We did not think clouds capable of such condensation—the blackness may be felt like velvet on a hearse. Would that something would rustle—but no—all is breathlessly still, and not a wind dares whistle. If there be any thing visible or audible hereabout, then are we stone-blind and stone-deaf. We have a vision!

See! a great City in a mist! All is not shrouded—at intervals something huge is beheld in the sky—what we know not, tower, temple, spire, dome, or a pile of nameless structures—one after the other fading away, or sinking and settling down into the gloom that grows deeper and deeper like a night. The stream of life seems almost hushed in the blind blank—yet you hear ever and anon, now here, now there, the slow sound of feet moving to their own dull echoes, and lo! the Sun

“Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams,”

like some great ghost. Ay, he *looks!* does he not? straight on *your* face, as if you two were the only beings there—and were held *looking* at each other in some strange communion. Surely you must sometimes have felt that emotion, when the Luminary seemed no longer luminous, but a dull-red brazen orb, sick unto the death—obscure the Shedder of Light and the Giver of Life lifeless!

The Sea has sent a tide-borne wind to the City, and you almost start in wonder to behold all the heavens clear of clouds, (how beautiful was the clearing!) and bending in a mighty blue bow, that brightly overarches all the brightened habitations of men! The spires shoot up into the sky—the domes tranquilly rest there—all the roofs glitter as with diamonds, all the white walls are lustrous, save where, here and there, some loftier range of buildings hangs its steadfast shadow o'er square or street, magnifying the city, by means of separate multitudes of structures, each town-like in itself, and the whole gathered together by the outward eye, and the inward imagination, worthy indeed of the name of Metropolis.

Let us sit down on this bench below the shadow of the Parthenon. The air is now so rarefied, that you can see not indistinctly the figure of a man on Arthur's Seat. The Calton, though a city hill—is as green as the Carter towering over the Border-forest. Not many years ago, no stone edifice was on his unviolated verdure—he was a true rural Mount, where the lassies bleached their claes, in a pure atmosphere, aloof from the city smoke almost as the sides and summit of Arthur's Seat. Flocks of sheep might have grazed here, had there been enclosures, and many milch-cows. But in their absence a pastoral

character was given to the Hill by its green silence, here and there broken by the songs and laughter of those linen-bleaching lassies, and by the arm-in-arm strolling of lovers in the morning light or the evening shade. Here married people use to walk with their children, thinking and feeling themselves to be in the country; and here elderly gentlemen, like ourselves, with gold-headed canes, or simple crutches, mused and meditated on the ongoings of the noisy lower world. Such a Hill, so close to a great City, yet undisturbed by it, and embued at all times with a feeling of sweeter peace, because of the immediate neighbourhood of the din and stir of which its green recess high up in the blue air never partook, seems now, in the mingled dream of imagination and memory, to have been a super-urban Paradise! But a city cannot, ought not to be, controlled in its growth; the natural beauty of this hill has had its day; now it is broken all round with wide walks, along which you might drive chariots a-breast; broad flights of stone-stairs lead up along the once elastic brae-turf; and its bosom is laden with towers and temples, monuments and mausoleums. Along one side, where hanging gardens might have been, magnificent as those of the old Babylon, stretches the macadamized Royal Road to London, flanked by one receptacle for the quiet dead, and by another for the unquiet living—a church-yard and a prison dying away in a bride-well. But, making amends for such hideous deformities, with front nobly looking to the cliffs, over a dell of dwellings seen dimly through the smoke-mist, stands, sacred to the Muses, an Edifice that might have pleased the eye of Pericles! Alas, immediately below, one that would have turned the brain of Palladio! Modern Athens indeed! Few are the Grecians among thy architects; those who are not Goths are Picts—and the king himself of the Painted People designed Nelson's Monument.

But who can be querulous on such a day? Weigh all its defects, designed and undesigned, and is not Edinburgh yet a noble city? Arthur's Seat! how like a lion! The magnificent range of Salisbury Crags, on which a battery might be built to blow the whole inhabitation to atoms! Our friend here, the Calton, with his mural crown! Our Castle on his Cliff! Gloriously hung round with national histories along all his battlements! Do they not embosom him in a style of grandeur worthy, if such it be, of a “City of Palaces?” Call all things by their right names, in heaven and on earth. Palaces they are not—nor are they built of marble; but they are stately houses, framed of stone from Craig-Leith quarry, almost as pale as the Parian; and when the sun looks fitfully through the storm, or as now, serenely through the calm, richer than Parian in the tempestuous or the peaceful light. Never beheld we the city wearing such a majestic metropolitan aspect.

“Ay, proudly fling thy white arms to the sea,
Queen of the unconquer'd North!”

How near the Frith! Gloriously does it supply the want of a river. It is a river, though

seeming and sweeping into, the sea; but a river that man may never bridge; and though still now as the sky, we wish you saw it in its magnificent madness, when brought on the roarings of the stormful tide

"Breaks the long wave that at the Pole began."

Coast-cities alone are Queens. All inland are but Tributaries. Earth's empyr belongs to the Power that sees its shadow in the sea. Two separate Cities, not twins—but one of ancient and one of modern birth—how harmoniously, in spite of form and features characteristically different, do they coalesce into one Capital! This miracle, methinks, is wrought by the Spirit of Nature on the World of Art. Her great features subdue almost into similarity a Whole constructed of such various elements, for 'tis all felt to be kindred with those guardian cliffs. Those eternal heights hold the Double City together in an amity that breathes over both the same national look—the impression of the same national soul. In the olden time, the city gathered herself almost under the very wing of the Castle; for in her heroic heart she ever heard, unalarmed but watchful, the alarms of war, and that cliff, under heaven, was on earth the rock of her salvation. But now the foundation of that rock, whence yet the tranquil burgher hears the morning and the evening bugle, is beautified by gardens that love its pensive shadow, for it tames the light to flowers by rude feet untrodden, and yielding garlands for the brows of perpetual peace. Thence elegance and grace arose; and while antiquity breathes over that wilderness of antique structures picturesquely huddled along the blue line of sky—as Wilkie once finely said, like the spine of some enormous animal; yet all along this side of that unriveted and mound-divided dell, now shines a new world of radiant dwellings, declaring by their regular but not monotonous magnificence, that the same people, whose "perfidious genius" preserved them by war unhumbled among the nations in days of darkness, have now drawn a strength as invincible, from the beautiful arts which have been cultivated by peace in the days of light.

And is the spirit of the inhabitation there worthy of the place inhabited? We are a Scotsman. And the great English Moralist has asked, where may a Scotsman be found who loves not the honour or the glory of his country better than truth? We are that Scotsman—though for our country would we die. Yet dearer too than life is to us the honour—if not the glory of our country; and had we a thousand lives, proudly would we lay them all down in the dust rather than give—or see given—one single stain

"Unto the silver cross, to Scotland dear,"

on which as yet no stain appears save those glorious weather-stains, that have fallen on its folds from the clouds of war and the storms of battle. Sufficient praise to the spirit of our land, that she knows how to love, admire, and rival—not in vain—the spirit of high-hearted and heroic England. Long as we and that other noble Isle

"Set as an emerald in the casing sea,"

in triple union breathe as one,

"Then come against us the whole world in arms,
And we will meet them!"

What is a people without pride? But let them know that its root rests on noble pillars; and in the whole range of strength and stateliness, what pillars are there stronger and statelier than those glorious two—Genius and Liberty? Here valour has fought—here philosophy has meditated—here poetry has sung. Are not our living yet as brave as our dead? All wisdom has not perished with the sages to whom we have built or are building monumental tombs. The muses yet love to breathe the pure mountain-air of Caledon. And have we not amongst us one myriad-minded man, whose name, without offence to that high-priest of nature, or his devoutest worshippers, may flow from our lips even when they utter that of SHAKESPEARE?

The Queen of the North has evaporated—and we again have a glimpse of the Highlands. But where's the Sun? We know not in what air to look for him, for who knows but it may now be afternoon? It is almost dark enough for evening—and if it be not far on in the day, then we shall have thunder. What saith our repeater? One o'clock. Usually the brightest hour of all the twelve—but any thing but bright at this moment. Can there be an eclipse going on—an earthquake at his toilette—or merely a brewing of storm? Let us consult our almanac. No eclipse set down for to-day—the old earthquake dwells in the neighbourhood of Comrie, and has never been known to journey thus far north—besides he has for some years been bed-ridden; argal, there is about to be a storm. What a fool of a land-tortoise were we to crawl up to the top of a mountain, when we might have taken our choice of half-a-dozen glens with cottages in them every other mile, and a village at the end of each with a comfortable Change-house! And up which of its sides, pray, was it that we crawled? Not this one—for it is as steep as a church—and we never in our life peeped over the brink of an uglier abyss. Ay, Mister Merlin, 'tis wise of you to be flying home into your crevice—put your head below your wing, and do cease that cry.—Croak! croak! croak! Where is the sooty sinner? We hear he is on the wing—but he either sees or smells us, probably both, and the horrid gurgle in his throat is choked by some cloud. Surely that was the suging of wings! A Bird! alighting within fifty yards of us—and, from his mode of folding his wings—an Eagle! This is too much—within fifty yards of an Eagle on his own mountain-top. Is he blind? Age darkens even an Eagle's eyes—but he is not old, for his plumage is perfect—and we see the glare of his far-keepers as he turns his head over his shoulder and regards his eyry on the cliff. We would not shoot him for a thousand a-year for life. Not old—how do we know that? Because he is a creature who is young at a hundred—so says Audubon—Swainson—our brother James—and all shepherds. Little suspects he who is lying so near him with his

Crutch. Our snuffy suit is of a colour with the storm-stained granite—and if he walk this way he will get a buffet. And he is walking this way—his head up, and his tail down—not hopping like a filthy raven—but one foot before the other—like a man—like a King. We do not altogether like it—it is rather alarming—he may not be an Eagle after all—but something worse—“Hurra! ye Sky-scraper! Christopher is upon you! take that, and that, and that”—all one tumbling scream, there he goes, Crutch and all, over the edge of the cliff. Dashed to death—but impossible for us to get the body. Whew! dashed to death indeed! There he wheels, all on fire, round the thundergloom. Is it electric matter in the atmosphere—or fear and wrath that illumine his wings?

We wish we were safe down. There is no wind here yet—none to speak of; but there is wind enough, to all appearance, in the region towards the west. The main body of the clouds is falling back on the reserve—and observing that movement the right wing deploys—as for the left it is broken, and its retreat will soon be a flight. Fear is contagious—the whole army has fallen into irremediable disorder—has abandoned its commanding position—and in an hour will be self-driven into the sea. We call that a Panic.

Glory be to the corps that covers the retreat. We see now the cause of that retrograde movement. In the north-west “far off its coming shone,” and “in numbers without number numberless,” lo! the adverse Host! Thrown out in front the beautiful rifle brigade comes fleetly on, extending in open order along the vast plain between the aerial Pine-mountains to yon Fire-cliffs. The enemy marches in masses—the space between the divisions now widening and now narrowing—and as sure as we are alive we hear the sound of trumpets. The routed army has rallied and re-appears—and, hark, on the extreme left a cannonade. Never before had the Unholy Alliance a finer park of artillery—and now its fire opens from the great battery in the centre, and the hurly-burly is general far and wide over the whole field of battle.

But these lead drops dancing on our bonnet tell us to take up our crutch and be off—for there it is sticking—and by and by the waters will be in flood, and we may have to pass a night on the mountain. Down we go.

We do not call this the same side of the mountain we crawled up! There, all was purple except what was green—and we were happy to be a heather-legged body, occasionally skipping like a grasshopper on turf. Here, all rocks save stones. Get out of the way, ye ptarmigans. We hate shingle from the bottom of our — oh dear! oh dear! but *this* is painful—slithering on shingle away down what is any thing but an inclined plane—feet foremost—accompanied with rattling debris—at railroad speed—every twenty yards or so dislodging a stone as big as one’s-self, who instantly joins the procession, and there they go hopping and jumping along with us, some before, some at each side, and, we shudder to think of it some behind—well somersettled over our head, thou Grey Wacké—but mercy

on us, and forgive us our sins, for if this lasts, in another minute we are all at the bottom of that pond of pitch. Take care of yourself, O’Bronte!

Here we are—sitting! How we were brought to assume this rather uneasy posture we do not pretend to say. We confine ourselves to the fact. Sitting beside a Tarn. Our escape appears to have been little less than miraculous, and must have been mainly owing, under Providence, to the Crutch. Who’s laughing? ‘Tis you, you old Witch, in hood and cloak, crouching on the cliff, as if you were warming your hands at the fire. Hold your tongue—and you may sit there to all eternity if you choose—you cloud-ridden hag! No—there will be a blow-up some-day—as there evidently has been here before now; but no more Geology—from the tarn, who is a ‘tarnation deep ‘un, runs a rill, and he offers to be our guide down to the Low Country.

Why, this does not look like the same day. No gloom here—but a green serenity—not so poetical perhaps, but, in a human light, far preferable to a “brown horror.” No sulphureous smell—“the air is balm.” No sultriness—how cool the circulating medium! In our youth, when we had wings on our feet—and were a feathered Mercury—Cherub we never were nor Cauliflower—by flying, in our weather-wisdom, from glen to glen, we have made one day a whole week—with, at the end, a Sabbath. For all over the really *mountainous* region of the Highlands, every glen has its own indescribable kind of day—all vaguely comprehended under the One Day that may happen to be uppermost; and Lowland meteorologists, meeting in the evening after a long absence—having, perhaps, parted that morning—on comparing notes lose their temper, and have been even known to proceed to extremities in defence of facts well-established of a most contradictory and irreconcilable nature.

Here is an angler fishing with the fly. In the glen beyond that range he would have used the minnow—and in the huge hollow behind our friends to the South-east, he might just as well try the bare hook—though it is not universally true that trouts don’t rise when there is thunder. Let us see how he throws. What a cable! Flies! Tufts of heather. Hollo, you there; friend, what sport? What sport, we say? No answer; are you deaf? Dumb? He flourishes his flail and is mute. Let us try what a whack on the back may elicit. Down he flings it, and staring on us with a pair of most extraordinary eyes, and a beard like a goat, is off like a shot. Alas! we have frightened the wretch out of his few poor wits, and he may kill himself among the rocks. He is indeed an idiot—an innocent. We remember seeing him near this very spot forty years ago—and he was not young then—they often live to extreme old age. No wonder he was terrified—for we are duly sensible of the *outré tout ensemble* we must have suddenly exhibited in the glimmer that visits those weak and red eyes—he is an albino. That whack was rash, to say the least of it—our Crutch was too much for him; but we hear him whining—and moaning—and, good God! there he is on his

knees with hands claspt in supplication—"Dinna kill me—dinna kill me—'am silly—'am silly—and folk say 'am auld—auld—auld.'" The harmless creature is convinced we are not going to kill him—takes from our hand what he calls his fishing rod and tackle—and laughs like an owl. "Ony meat—ony meat—ony meat?" "Yes, innocent, there is some meat in this wallet, and you and we shall have our dinner." "Ho! ho! ho! ho! a smelled, a smelled! a can say the Lord's Prayer." "What's your name, my man?" "Daft Dooggy the Haveril." "Sit down, Dugald." A sad mystery all this—a drop of water on the brain will do it—so wise physicians say, and we believe it. For all that, the brain is not the soul. He takes the food with a kind of howl—and carries it away to some distance, muttering "a ye eats by mysel!" He is saying grace! And now he is eating like an animal. "Tis a saying of old, 'Their lives are hidden with God!'"

This lovely little glen is almost altogether new to us: yet so congenial its quiet to the longings of our heart, that all at once it is familiar to us as if we had sojourned here for days—as if that cottage were our dwelling-place—and we had retired hither to await the close. Were we never here before—in the olden and golden time? Those dips in the summits of the mountain seem to recall from oblivion memories of a morning all the same as this, enjoyed by us with a different joy, almost as if then we were a different being, joy then the very element in which we drew our breath, satisfied now to live in the atmosphere of sadness often thickened with grief. 'Tis thus that there grows a confusion among the past times in the dormitory—call it not the burial-place—over-shadowed by sweet or solemn imagery—in the inland regions; nor can we question the recollections as they rise—being ghosts, they are silent—their coming and their going alike a mystery—but sometimes—as now—they are happy hauntings—and age is almost gladdened into illusion of returning youth.

'Tis a lovely little glen as in all the Highlands—yet we know not that a painter would see in it the subject of a picture—for the sprinklings of young trees have been sown capriciously by nature, and there seems no reason why on that hillside, and not on any other, should survive the remains of an old wood. Among the multitude of knolls a few are eminent with rocks and shrubs, but there is no central assemblage, and the green wilderness wantons in such disorder that you might believe the pools there to be, not belonging as they are to the same running water, but each itself a small separate lakelet fed by its own spring. True, that above its homehills there are mountains—and these are cliffs on which the eagle might not disdain to build—but the range wheels away in its grandeur to face a loftier region, of which we see here but the summits swimming in the distant clouds.

God bless that hut! and have its inmates in his holy keeping! But what Fairy is this coming unawares on us sitting by the side of the most lucid of little wells? Set down thy pitcher, my child, and let us have a look at

thy happiness—for though thou mayst wonder at our words, and think us a strange old man, coming and going, once and for ever, to thee and thine a shadow and no more, yet lean thy head towards us that we may lay our hands on it and bless it—and promise, as thou art growing up here, sometimes to think of the voice that spake to thee by the Birk-tree well. Love, fear, and serve God, as the Bible teaches—and whatever happens thee, quake not, but put thy trust in Heaven.

Do not be afraid of him, sweet one! O'Bronte would submit to be flayed alive rather than bite a child—see, he offers you a paw—take it without trembling—nay, he will let thee ride on his back, my pretty dear—won't thou, O'Bronte? and scamper with thee up and down the knolls like her coal-black charger rejoicing to bear the Fairy Queen. Thou tellest us thy father and mother, sisters and brothers, all are dead; yet with a voice cheerful as well as plaintive. Smile—laugh—sing—as thou wert doing a minute ago—as thou hast done for many a morning—and shall do for many a morning more on thy way to the well—in the woods—on the braes—in the house—often all by thyself when the old people are out of doors not far off—or when sometimes they have for a whole day been from home out of the glen. Forget not our words—and no evil can befall thee that may not, weak as thou art, be borne—and nothing wicked that is allowed to walk the earth will ever be able to hurt a hair on thy head.

My stars! what a lovely little animal! A tame fawn, by all that is wild—kneeling down—to drink—no—no—at his lady's feet. The colley caught it—thou sayest—on the edge of the Auld wood—and by the time its wounds were cured, it seemed to have forgot its mother, and soon learnt to follow thee about to far-off places quite out of sight of this—and to play gamesome tricks like a creature born among human dwellings. What! it dances like a kid—does it—and sometimes you put a garland of wild flowers round its neck—and pursue it like a huntress, as it pretends to be making its escape into the forest?

Look, child, here is a pretty green purse for you, that opens and shuts with a spring—so—and in it there is a gold coin, called a sovereign, and a crooked sixpence. Don't blush—that was a graceful curtesy. Keep the crooked sixpence for good-luck, and you never will want. With the yellow fellow buy a Sunday gown and a pair of Sunday shoes, and what else you like; and now—you two, lead the way—try a race to the door—and old Christopher North will carry the pitcher—balancing it on his head—thus—ha! O'Bronte galloping along as umpire. The Fawn has it, and by a neck has beat Camilla.

We shall lunch ere we go—and lunch well too—for this is a poor man's, not a pauper's hut, and Heaven still grants his prayer—"give us this day our daily bread." Sweeter—richer bannocks of barley-meal never met the mouth of mortal man—nor more delicious butter. "We salt it, sir, for a friend in Glasgow—but now and then we tak' a bite of the fresh—do oblige us a', sir, by eatin', and you'll maybe

find the mutton-ham no that bad, though I've kent it fatter—and, as you ha'e a long walk afore you, excuse me, sir, for being sae bauld as to suggest a glass o'speerit in your milk. The gudeman is temperate, and he's been sae a' his life—but we keep it for a cordial—and that bottle—to be sure it's a gay big ane—and would thole replenishing—has lasted us syne Whitsuntide."

So presseth us to take care of number one the gudewife, while the gudeman, busy as ourselves, eyes her with a well-pleased face, but saith nothing, and the bonnie we bit lassie sits on her stool at the wunnoc wi' her coggie ready to do any service at a look, and supping little or nothing, out of bashfulness in presence of Christopher North, who she believes is a good, and thinks may, perhaps, be some great man. Our third bannock has had the gooseberry jam laid on it thick by "the gudewife's ain haun',"—and we suspect at that last wide bite we have smeared the corners of our mouth—but it will only be making matters worse to attempt licking it off with our tongue. Pussie! thou hast a cunning look—purring on our knees—and though those glass een o' thine are blinking at the cream on the saucer—with which thou jalousest we intend to let thee wet thy whiskers,—we fear thou mak'st no bones of the poor birdies in the brake, and that many an unlucky leveret has lost its wits at the spring of such a tiger.—Cats are queer creatures, and have an instinctive liking to Warlocks.

And these two old people have survived all their children—sons and daughters! They have told us the story of their life—and as calmly as if they had been telling of the trials of some other pair. Perhaps, in our sympathy, though we say but little, they feel a strength that is not always theirs—perhaps it is a relief from silent sorrow to speak to one who is a stranger to them, and yet, as they may think, a brother in affliction—but prayer like thanksgiving assures us that there is in this hut a Christian composure, far beyond the need of our pity, and sent from a region above the stars.

There cannot be a cleaner cottage. Tidiness, it is pleasant to know, has for a good many years past been establishing itself in Scotland among the minor domestic virtues.

Once established it will never decay; for it must be felt to brighten, more than could be imagined by our fathers, the whole aspect of life. No need for any other household fairy to sweep this floor. An orderly creature we have seen she is, from all her movements out and in doors—though the guest of but an hour. They have told us that they had known what are called better days—and were once in a thriving way of business in a town. But they were born and bred in the country; and their manners, not rustic but rural, breathe of its serene and simple spirit—at once Lowland and Highland—to us a pleasant union, not without a certain charm of grace.

What loose leaves are those lying on the Bible? A few odd numbers of the SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD. We shall take care, our friends, that all the Numbers, bound in three

large volumes, shall, ere many weeks elapse, be lying for you at the Manse. Let us recite to you, our worthy friends, a small sacred Poem, which we have by heart. Christian, keep your eye on the page, and if we go wrong, do not fear to set us right. Can you say many psalms and hymns? But we need not ask—for

"Piety is sweet to infant minds;"

what they love they remember—for how easy—how happy—to get dear things by heart! Happiest of all—the things held holy on earth as in heaven—because appertaining here to Eternal Life.

TO THE SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD. BY THE REV. DUNCAN GRANT, A. M., MINISTER OF FORRES.

"Beauteous on our heath-clad mountains,
May our HERALD's feet appear;
Sweet, by silver lakes and fountains,
May his voice be to our ear.
Let the tenants of our rocks,
Shepherds watching o'er their flocks,
Village swain and peasant boy,
Thee salute with songs of joy!

"CHRISTIAN HERALD! spread the story
Of Redemption's wondrous plan;
'Tis Jehovah's brightest glory,
Thy his highest gift to man;
Angels on their harps of gold,
Love its glories to unfold;
Heralds who its influence wield,
Make the waste a fruitful field.

"To the fount of mercy soaring,
On the wings of faith and love;
And the depths of grace exploring,
By the light shed from above;
Show us whence life's waters flow,
And where trees of blessing grow,
Bearing fruit of heavenly bloom,
Breathing Eden's rich perfume.

"Love to God and man expressing,
In thy course of mercy speed;
Lead to springs of joy and blessing,
And with heavenly manna feed
Scotland's children high and low,
Till the Lord they truly know:
As to us our fathers told,
He was known by them of old.

"To the young, in season vernal,
Jesus in his grace disclose;
As the tree of life eternal,
'Neath whose shade they may repose,
Shielded from the noontide ray,
And from ev'ning's tribes of prey;
And refresh'd with fruits of love,
And with music from above.

"CHRISTIAN HERALD! may the blessing
Of the Highest thee attend,
That, this chiefest boon possessing,
Thou may'st prove thy country's friend:
Tend to make our land assume
Something of its former bloom,
When the dews of heaven were seen
Sparkling on its pastures green;

"When the voice of warm devotion
To the throne of God arose—
Mighty as the sound of ocean,
Calm as nature in repose;—
Sweeter, than when Araby
Perfume breathes from flow'r and tree,
Rising 'bove the shining sphere,
To Jehovah's list'ning ear."

It is time we were going—but we wish to hear how thy voice sounds, Christian, when it reads. So read these same verses, first "into yourself," and then to us. They speak of mercies above your comprehension, and ours, and all men's; for they speak of the infinite goodness and mercy of God—but though thou hast committed in thy short life no sins, or but small, towards thy fellow-creatures—how

could'st thou? yet thou knowest we are all sinful in His eyes, and thou knowest on whose merits is the reliance of our hopes of Heaven. Thank you, Christian. Three minutes from two by your house-clock—she gives a clear warning—and three minutes from two by our watch—rather curious this coincidence to such a nicety—we must take up our Crutch and go. Thank thee, bonnie wee Christian—in wi' the bannocks intil our pouch—but we fear you must take us for a sad glutton.

“Zicketty, dicketty, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
Down the mouse ran,
Zicketty, dicketty, dock.”

Come closer, Christian—and let us put it to thine ear. What a pretty face of wonder at the chime! Good people, you have work to do in the hay-field—let us part—God bless you—Good-by—farewell!

Half an hour since we parted—we cannot help being a little sad—and fear we were not so kind to the old people—not so considerate as we ought to have been—and perhaps though pleased with us just now, they may say to one another before evening that we were too merry for our years. Nonsense. We were all merry together—daft Uncle among the lave—for the creature came stealing in and sat down on his own stool in the corner; and what's the use of wearing a long face at all times like a Methodist minister! A Methodist minister! Why, John Wesley was facete, and Whitfield humorous, and Rowland Hill witty—though he, we believe, was not a Methody; yet were their hearts fountains of tears—and ours is not a rock—if it be, 'tis the rock of Horeb.

Ha, Hamish! Here we are beneath the Merlin Crag. What sport? Why, five brace is not so much amiss—and they are thumpers. Fifteen brace in all. Ducks and flappers! Seven leash. We are getting on.

“But what are these,
So wether'd and so wild in their attire
That look not like th' inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question. You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips!—you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so!”

Shakspeare is not familiar, we find, among the natives of Loch-Etive side—else these figures would reply,

“All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glammis!”

But not satisfied with laying their choppy fingers on their skinny lips, they now put them to their plooky noses, having first each dipped fore and thumb in his mull, and gibber Gaelic, to us unintelligible as the quacking of ducks, when a Christian auditor has been prevented from catching its meaning by the gobbling of turkeys.

Witches at the least, and about to prophesy to us some pleasant events, that are to terminate disastrously in after years. Is there no nook of earth perfectly solitary—but must natural or supernatural footsteps haunt the remotest and most central places? But now we shall have our fortunes told in choice Earse, for sure these

are the Children of the Mist, and perhaps they will favour us with a running commentary on Ossian. Stout, grim, heather-legged bodies they are, one and all, and luckily we are provided with sauff and tobacco sufficient for the whole crew. Were they even ghosts they will not refuse a sneeshin', and a Highland spirit will look picturesque puffing a cigar!—Hark! we know them and their vocation. These are the Genii of the Mountain-dew; and their hidden enginery, depend on't, is not far off, but buried in the bowels of some brae. See!—a faint mist dissipating itself over the heather! There—at work, shaming the idle waste, and in use and wont to break even the Sabbath-day, is a *SRILL*!

Do we look like Excisemen? The Crutch has indeed a suspicious family resemblance to a gauging-rod; and literary characters, like us, may well be mistaken for the Supervisor himself. But the smuggler's eye knows his enemy at a glance, as the fox knows a hound; and the whispering group discern at once that we are of a nobler breed. That one fear dispelled, Highland hospitality bids us welcome, even into the mouth of the malt-kiln, and, with a smack on our loof, the Chief volunteers to initiate us into the grand mysteries of the Worm.

The turf-door is flung outward on its lithe hinges, and already what a gracious smell! In we go, ushered by unbanneted Celts, gentlemen in manner wherever the kilt is worn! for the tartan is the symbol of courtesy, and Mac a good password all the world over between man and man. Lowland eyes are apt to water in the peat-reek, but ere long we shall have another “drappie in our e'e,” and drink to the Clans in the “unchristened cretur.” What a sad neglect in our education, among all the acquired lingoes extant, to have overlooked the Gaelic! Yet nobody who has ever heard P. R. preach an Earse Sermon, need despair of discoursing in that tongue after an hour's practice; so let us forget, if possible, every word of English, and the language now needed will rise up in its place.

And these figures in men's coats and women's petticoats are females! We are willing to believe it in spite of their beards. One of them absolutely suckling a child! Thank you, my dear sir, but we cannot swallow the contents of that quech. Yet, let us try.—A little too warm, and rather harsh; but meat and drink to a man of age. That seems to be goat-milk cheese, and the scones are barley; and they and the speerit will wash one another down in an amicable plea, nor quarrel at close quarters. Honey too—heather-honey of this blessed year's produce. Hecate's forefinger mixes it in a quech with mountain-dew—and that is Athole-brose!

There cannot be the least doubt in the world that the Hamiltonian system of teaching languages is one of the best ever invented. It will enable any pupil of common-run powers of attention to read any part of the New Testament in Greek in some twenty lessons of an hour each. But what is that to the principle of the worm? Half a blessed hour has not elapsed since we entered into the door of this hill-house, and we offer twenty to one that we read Ossian, *ad*

aperturam libri, in the original Gaelic. We feel as if we could translate the works of Jeremy Bentham into that tongue—ay, even Francis Maximus Macnab's *Theory of the Universe*. We guaranty ourselves to do both, this identical night before we go to sleep, and if the printers are busy during the intermediate hours, to correct the press in the morning. Why, there are not above five thousand roots—but we are getting a little gizzy—into a state of civilization in the wilderness—and, gentlemen, let us drink—in solemn silence—the “Memory of Fingal.”

O St. Cecilia! we did not lay our account with a bagpipe! What is the competition of pipers in the Edinburgh Theatre, small as it is, to this damnable drone in an earth-cell, eight feet by six! Yet while the drums of our ears are continuing to split like old parchment title-deeds to lands nowhere existing, and all our animal economy, from finger to toe, is one agonizing dirl, *Æolus* himself sits as proud as *Lucifer* in *Pandemonium*; and as the old soldiers keep tending the Worm in the reek as if all were silence, the male-looking females, and especially the he-she with the imp at her breast, nod, and smirk, and smile, and snap their fingers, in a challenge to a straspey—and, by all that is horrible, a red hairy arm is round our neck, and we are half-choked with the fumes of whisky-kisses. An hour ago, we were dreaming of *Malvina*! and here she is with a vengeance, while we in the character of *Oscar* are embraced till almost all the Lowland breath in our body expires.

And this is *STILL-LIFE*!

Extraordinary it is, that, go where we will, we are in a wonderfully short time discovered to be *Christopher North*. A few years ago, the instant we found our feet in a mine in *Cornwall*, after a descent of about one-third the bored earth's diameter, we were saluted by name by a grim *Monops* who had not seen the upper regions for years, preferring the interior of the planet; and forthwith, “*Christopher North, Christopher North*,” reverberated along the galleries, while the gnomes came flocking in all directions, with safety-lamps, to catch a glimpse of the famous Editor. On another occasion, we remember when coasting the south of *Ireland* in our schooner, falling in with a boat like a cockle-shell, well out of the Bay of *Bantry*, and of the three half-naked Paddies that were ensnaring the finny race, two smoked us at the helm, and bawled out, “*Kitty go brag!*” Were we to go up in a balloon, and by any accident descend in the interior of *Africa*, we have not the slightest doubt that *Sultan Belloo* would know us in a jiffy, having heard our person so frequently described by *Major Denham* and *Captain Clapperton*. So we are known, it seems, in the *Still*—by the men of the *Worm*? Yes—the principal proprietor in the concern is a school-master over about *Loch-Earn-Head*—a man of no mean literary abilities, and an occasional contributor to the *Magazine*. He visits *The Shop* in breeches—but now mounts the kilt—and astonishes us by the versatility of his talents. In one of the most active working bees we recognise a caddy, formerly in *Auld Reeky*

ycleped “*The Despatch*,” now retired to the Braes of *Balquhiddy*, and breathing strongly the spirit of his youth. With that heather-houghed gentleman, fiery-tressed as the *God of Day*, we were, for the quarter of a century that we held a large grazing farm, in the annual practice of drinking a gill at the *Falkirk Tryst*; and—wonderful, indeed, to think how old friends meet, we were present at the amputation of the right leg of that timber-toed hero with the bushy whiskers—in the *Hospital of Rosetta*—having accompanied *Sir David Baird's* splendid Indian army to *Egypt*.

Shying, for the present, the question in *Political Economy*, and viewing the subject in a moral, social, and poetical light, what, pray, is the true influence of *THE STILL*? It makes people idle. Idle? What species of idleness is that which consists in being up night and day—traversing moors and mountains in all weathers—constantly contriving the most skilful expedients for misleading the *Excise*, and which, on some disastrous day, when dragoons suddenly shake the desert—when all is lost except honour—hundreds of gallons of wash (alas! alas! a-day!) wickedly wasted among the heather roots, and the whole beautiful Apparatus lying battered and spiritless in the sun beneath the accursed blows of the Pagans—returns, after a few weeks set apart to natural grief and indignation, with unabated energy, to the selfsame work, even within view of the former ruins, and pouring out a libation of the first amalgamated hotness that deserves the name of *speerit*, devotes the whole Board of *Excise* to the *Infernal Gods*?

The argument of idleness has not a leg to stand on, and falls at once to the ground. But the *Still* makes men dishonest. We grant that there is a certain degree of dishonesty in cheating the *Excise*; and we shall allow yourself to fix it, who give as fine a caulker from the *sma' still*, as any moral writer on *Honesty* with whom we have the pleasure occasionally to take a family dinner. But the poor fellows either grow or purchase their own malt. They do not steal it; and many is the silent benediction that we have breathed over a bit patch of barley, far up on its stoney soil among the hills, bethinking that it would yield up its precious spirit unexcised! Neither do they charge for it any very extravagant price—for what is twelve, fourteen, twenty shillings a gallon for such drink divine as is now steaming before us in that celestial caldron!

Having thus got rid of the charge of idleness and dishonesty, nothing more needs to be said on the *Moral Influence of the Still*; and we come now, in the second place, to consider it in a *Social Light*. The biggest bigot will not dare to deny, that without whisky the *Highlands of Scotland* would be uninhabitable. And if all the population were gone, or extinct, where then would be your social life? *Smugglers* are seldom drunkards; neither are they men of boisterous manners or savage dispositions. In general, they are grave, sedate, peaceable characters, not unlike elders of the kirk. Even *Excisemen* admit them, except on rare occasions, when human patience is exhausted, to be merciful. Four pleasanter men

do not now exist in the bosom of the earth, than the friends with whom we are now on the hobnob. Stolen waters are sweet—a profound and beautiful reflection—and no doubt originally made by some peripatetic philosopher at a Still. The very soul of the strong drink evaporates with the touch of the gauger's wand. An evil day would it indeed be for Scotland, that should witness the extinguishment of all her free and unlicensed mountain stills! The charm of Highland hospitality would be wan and withered, and the *doch an dorras*, instead of a blessing, would sound like a ban.

We have said that smugglers are never drunkards, not forgetting that general rules are proved by exceptions; nay, we go farther, and declare that the Highlanders are the soberest people in Europe. Whisky is to them a cordial, a medicine, a life-preserver. Chief of the umbrella and wraprascal! were you ever in the Highlands! We shall produce a single day from any of the fifty-two weeks of the year that will outargue you on the present subject, in half-an-hour. What sound is that? The rushing of rain from heaven, and the sudden outcry of a thousand waterfalls. Look through a chink in the bothy, and far as you can see for the mists, the heath-covered desert is steaming like the smoke of a smouldering fire. Winds biting as winter come sweeping on their invisible chariots armed with scythes, down every glen, and scatter far and wide over the mountains the spray of the raging lochs. Now you have a taste of the summer cold, more dangerous far than that of Yule, for it often strikes "aitches" into the unprepared bones, and congeals the blood of the shelterless shepherd on the hill. But one glorious gurgle of the speerit down the throat of a storm-stayed man! and bold as a rainbow he faces the reappearing sun, and feels assured (though there he may be mistaken) of dying at a good old age.

Then think, oh think, how miserably poor are most of those men who have fought our battles, and so often reddened their bayonets in defence of our liberties and our laws! Would you grudge them a little whisky? And, depend upon it, a little is the most, taking one day of the year with another, that they imbibe. You figure to yourself two hundred thousand Highlanders, taking snuff, and chewing tobacco, and drinking whisky, all year long. Why, one pound of snuff, two of tobacco, and two gallons of whisky, would be beyond the mark of the yearly allowance of every grown-up man! Thousands never taste such luxuries at all—meal and water, potatoes and salt, their only food. The animal food, sir, and the fermented liquors of various kinds, Foreign and British, which to our certain knowledge you have swallowed within the last twelve months, would have sufficed for fifty families in our abstemious region of mist and snow. We have known you drink a bottle of champagne, a bottle of port, and two bottles of claret, frequently at a sitting, equal, in prime cost, to three gallons of the best Glenlivet! And You (who, by the way, are an English clergyman, a circumstance we had entirely forgotten, and have published a Discourse against Drunkenness, dedicated to a Bishop) pour forth the

Lamentations of Jeremiah over the sinful multitude of Small Stills! Hypocrisy! hypocrisy! where shalt thou hide thy many-coloured sides?

Whisky is found by experience to be, on the whole, a blessing in so misty and mountainous a country. It destroys disease and banishes death; without some such stimulant the people would die of cold. You will see a fine old Gael, of ninety or a hundred, turn up his little finger to a caulker with an air of patriarchal solemnity altogether scriptural; his great-grandchildren eyeing him with the most respectful affection, and the youngest of them toddling across the floor, to take the quech from his huge, withered, and hairy hand, which he lays on the amiable Joseph's sleek craniology, with a blessing heartier through the Glenlivet, and with all the earnestness of religion. There is no disgrace in getting drunk—in the Highlands—not even if you are of the above standing—for where the people are so poor, such a state is but of rare occurrence; while it is felt all over the land of sleet and snow, that a "drap o' the creatur" is a very necessary of life, and that but for its "dew" the mountains would be uninhabitable. At fairs, and funerals, and marriages, and suchlike merry meetings, sobriety is sent to look after the sheep; but, except on charitable occasions of that kind, sobriety stays at home among the peat-reek, and is contented with crowdy. Who that ever stooped his head beneath a Highland hut would grudge a few gallons of Glenlivet to its poor but unrepining inmates? The seldomer they get drunk the better—and it is but seldom they do so; but let the rich man—the monied moralist, who bewails and begrudges the Gael a modicum of the liquor of life, remember the doom of a certain Dives, who, in a certain place that shall now be nameless, cried, but cried in vain for a drop of water. Lord bless the Highlanders, say we, for the most harmless, hospitable, peaceable, brave people that ever despised breeches, blue pibrochs, took invincible standards, and believed in the authenticity of Ossian's poems. In that pure and lofty region ignorance is not, as elsewhere, the mother of vice—penury cannot repress the noble rage of the mountaineer as "he sings aloud old songs that are the music of the heart;" while superstition herself has an elevating influence, and will be suffered, even by religion, to show her shadowy shape and mutter her wild voice through the gloom that lies on the heads of the remote glens, and among the thousand caves of echo in her iron-bound coasts dashed on for ever—night and day—summer and winter—by those sleepless seas, who have no sooner laid their heads on the pillow than up they start with a howl that cleaves the Orcades, and away off in search of shipwrecks round the corner of Cape Wrath.

In the third place, what shall we say of the poetical influence of STILLS? What more poetical life can there be than that of the men with whom we are now quaffing the barley-bree? They live with the moon and stars. All the night winds are their familiars. If there be such things as ghosts, and fairies, and apparitions—and that there are, no man who has travelled much by himself after sunset will

deny, except from the mere love of contradiction—they see them; or when invisible, which they generally are, hear them—here—there—everywhere—in sky, forest, cave, or hollow-sounding world immediately beneath their feet. Many poets walk these wilds; nor do their songs perish. They publish not with Blackwood or with Murray—but for centuries on centuries, such songs are the preservers, often the sources, of the oral traditions that go glimmering and gathering down the stream of years. Native are they to the mountains as the blooming heather, nor shall they ever cease to invest them with the light of poetry—in defiance of large farms, Methodist preachers, and the Caledonian Canal.

People are proud of talking of solitude. It redounds, they opine, to the honour of their great-mindedness to be thought capable of living, for an hour or two, by themselves, at a considerable distance from knots or skeins of their fellow-creatures. Byron, again, thought he showed his superiority, by swearing as solemnly as a man can do in the Spenserian stanza, that

“To sit alone, and muse o’er flood and fell,”

has nothing whatever to do with solitude—and that, if you wish to know and feel what solitude really is, you must go to Almack’s.

“This—this is solitude—this is to be alone!”

His Lordship’s opinions were often peculiar—but the passage has been much admired; therefore we are willing to believe that the Great Desert is, in point of loneliness, unable to stand a philosophical, much less a poetical comparison, with a well-frequented fancy-ball. But is the statement not borne out by facts? Zoology is on its side—more especially two of its most interesting branches, Entomology and Ornithology.

Go to a desert and clap your back against a cliff. Do you think yourself alone? What a ninny! Your great clumsy splay feet are bruising to death a batch of beetles. See that spider whom you have widowed, running up and down your elegant leg, in distraction and despair, bewailing the loss of a husband who, however savage to the ephemerals, had always smiled sweetly upon her. Meanwhile, your shoulders have crushed a colony of small red ants settled in a moss city beautifully roofed with lichens—and that accounts for the sharp tickling behind your ear, which you keep scratching, no Solomon, in ignorance of the cause of that effect. Should you sit down—we must beg to draw a veil over your hurdies, which at the moment extinguish a fearful amount of animal life—creation may be said to groan under them; and, insect as you are yourself, you are defrauding millions of insects of their little day. All the while you are supposing yourself alone! Now are you not, as we hinted, a prodigious ninny? But the whole wilderness—as you choose to call it—is crawling with various life. London, with its million and a half of inhabitants—including of course its suburbs—is, compared with it, an empty joke. Die—and you will soon be picked to the bones. The air swarms with sharpers—and an insurrection of radicals will

attack your corpse from the worm-holes of the earth. Corbies, ravens, hawks, eagles, all the feathered furies of beak and bill, will come flying ere sunset to anticipate the maggots, and carry your remains—if you will allow us to call them so—over the whole of Argyleshire in many living sepulchres. We confess ourselves unable to see the solitude of this—and begin to agree with Byron, that a man is less crowded at a masquerade.

But the same subject may be illustrated less tragically, and even with some slight comic effect. A man among mountains is often surrounded on all sides with mice and moles. What cozy nests do the former construct at the roots of heather, among tufts of grass in the rushes, and the moss on the greensward! As for the latter, though you think you know a mountain from a molehill, you are much mistaken; for what is a mountain, in many cases, but a collection of molehills—and of fairy knolls?—which again introduce a new element into the composition, and show, in still more glaring colours, your absurdity in supposing yourself to be in solitude. The “Silent People” are around you at every step. You may not see them—for they are dressed in invisible green; but they see you, and that unaccountable whispering and buzzing sound one often hears in what we call the wilderness, what is it, or what can it be, but the fairies making merry at your expense, pointing out to each other the extreme silliness of your meditative countenance, and laughing like to split at your fond conceit of being alone among a multitude of creatures far wiser than your self.

But should all this fail to convince you, that you are never less alone than when you think yourself alone, and that a man never knows what it is to be in the very heart of life till he leaves London, and takes a walk in Glen-Etive—suppose yourself to have been leaning with your back against that knoll, dreaming of the far-off race of men, when all at once the support gives way inwards, and you tumble head over heels in among a snug coterie of kilted Celts, in the very act of creating Glenlivet in a great warlock’s caldron, seething to the top with the Spirit of Life!

Such fancies as these, among many others, were with us in the Still. But a glimmering and a humming and a dizzy bewilderment hangs over that time and place, finally dying away into oblivion. Here are we sitting in a glade of a birch-wood in what must be Gleno—some miles from the Still. Hamish asleep, as usual, whenever he lies down, and all the dogs yowling in dreams, and Surefoot standing with his long beard above ours, almost the same in longitude. We have been more, we suspect, than half-seas over, and are now lying on the shore of sobriety, almost a wreck. The truth is, that the new spirit is even more dangerous than the new light. Both at first dazzle, then obfuscate, and lastly darken into temporary death. There is, we fear, but one word of one syllable in the English language that could fully express our late condition. Let our readers solve the enigma. Oh! those quechs! By

"What drugs, what spells,
What conjurations, and what mighty magic,"

was Christopher overthrown! A strange confusion of sexes, as of men in petticoats and women in breeches—gowns transmogrified into jackets—caps into bonnets—and thick naked hairy legs into slim ankles decent in hose—all somewhere whirling and dancing by, dim and obscure, to the sound of something groaning and yelling, sometimes inarticulately, as if it came from something instrumental, and then mixed up with a wild gibberish, as if shrieking, somehow or other, from living lips, human and brute—for a dream of yowling dogs is over all—utterly confounds us as we strive to muster in recollection the few last hours that have passed tumultuously through our brain—and then a wide black moor, sometimes covered with day, sometimes with night, stretches around us, hemmed in on all sides by the tops of mountains, seeming to reel in the sky. Frequent flashes of fire, and a whirling as of the wings of birds—but sound and sight alike uncertain—break again upon our dream. Let us not mince the matter—we can afford the confession—we have been overtaken by liquor—sadly intoxicated—out with it at once! Frown not, fairest of all sweet—for we lay our calamity, not to the charge of the Glenlivet circling in countless quechs, but at the door of that inveterate enemy to sobriety—the Fresh Air.

But now we are as sober as a judge. Pity our misfortune—rather than forgive our sin. We entered that Still in a State of innocence before the Fall. Where we fell, we know not—in divers ways and sundry places—between that magic cell on the breast of Benachochie, and this glade in Gleno. But,

"There are worse things in life than a fall among
heather."

Surefoot, we suppose, kept himself tolerably sober—and O'Bronte, at each successive cloit, must have assisted us to remount—for Hamish, from his style of sleeping, must have been as bad as his master; and, after all, it is wonderful to think how we got here—over hags and mosses, and marshes and quagmires, like those in which "armies whole have sunk." But the truth is, that never in the whole course of our lives—and that course has been a strange one—did we ever so often as once lose our way. Set us down blindfolded on Zahara, and we will beat the caravan to Timbuctoo. Something or other mysteriously indicative of the right direction touches the soles of our feet in the shape of the ground they tread; and even when our souls have gone soaring far away, or have sunk within us, still have our feet pursued the shortest and the safest path that leads to the bourne of our pilgrimage. Is not that strange? But not stranger surely than the flight of the bee, on his first voyage over the coves of the wilderness to the far-off heather-bells—or of the dove that is sent by some Jew stockjobber, to communicate to Dutchmen the rise or fall of the funds, from London to Hamburgh, from the clear shores of silver Thames to the muddy shallows of the Zuyder-Zee.

FLIGHT FOURTH—DOWN RIVER AND UP LOCH.

LET us inspect the state of Brown Bess. Right barrel empty—left barrel—what is the meaning of this!—crammed to the muzzle! Ay, that comes on visiting Stills. We have been snapping away at the coveys and single birds all over the moor, without so much as a pluff, with the right-hand cock—and then, imagining that we had fired, have kept loading away at the bore to the left, till, see! the ramrod absolutely stands upright in the air, with only about three inches hidden in the hollow! What a narrow—a miraculous escape has the world had of losing Christopher North! Had he drawn that trigger instead of this, Brown Bess would have burst to a moral certainty, and blown the old gentleman piecemeal over the heather. "In the midst of life we are in death!" Could we but know one in a hundred of the close approachings of the skeleton, we should lead a life of perpetual shudder. Often and often do his bony fingers almost clutch our throat, or his foot is put out to give us a cross-buttock. But a saving arm pulls him back, ere we have seen so much as his shadow. We believe all this—but the belief that comes not from something steadfastly present before our eyes, is barren; and thus it is, since believing is not seeing, that we walk hoodwinked nearly all our days, and worst of all blindness is that of ingratitude and forgetfulness of Him whose shield is for ever over us, and whose mercy shall be with us in the world beyond the grave.

By all that is most beautifully wild in animated nature, a Roe! a Roe! Shall we slay him where he stands, or let him vanish in silent glidings in among his native woods? What a fool for asking ourselves such a question! Slay him where he stands to be sure—for many pleasant seasons hath he led in his leafy lairs, a life of leisure, delight, and love, and the hour is come when he must sink down on his knees in a sudden and painful death—fair silvan dreamer! We have drawn that multitudinous shot—and both barrels of Brown Bess now are loaded with ball—for Hamish is yet lying with his head on the rifle. Whiz! whiz! one is through lungs, and another through neck—and seemingly rather to sleep than die, (so various are the many modes of expiration!)

"In quietness he lays him down
Gently, as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze has died,
Against an anchor'd vessel's side."

Ay—Hamish—you may start to your feet—and see realized the vision of your sleep. What a set of distracted dogs! But O'Bronte first catches sight of the quarry—and clearing, with grasshopper spangs, the patches of stunted coppice, stops stock-still beside the roe in the glade, as if admiring and wondering at the beauty of the fair spotted creature! Yes, dogs have a sense of the beautiful. Else how can you account for their loving so to lie down at the feet and lick the hands of the virgin whose eyes are mild, and forehead meek, and hair of placid sunshine, rather than act the same part towards ugly women, who,

coarser and coarser in each successive widowhood, when at their fourth husband are beyond expression hideous, and felt to be so by the whole canine tribe! Spenser must have seen some dog like O'Bronte lying at the feet and licking the hand of some virgin—sweet reader, like thyself—else never had he painted the posture of that Lion who guarded through Fairyland

“Heavenly Una and her milkwhite lamb.”

A divine line of Wordsworth's, which we shall never cease quoting on to the last of our inditings, even to our dying day!

But where, Hamish, are all the flappers, the mawies, and the mallards? What! You have left them—hare, grouse, bag, and all, at the Still! We remember it now—and all the distillers are to-night to be at our Tent, bringing with them feathers, fur, and hide—ducks, pussy, and deer. But take the roe on your stalwart shoulders, Hamish, and bear it down to the silvan dwelling at the mouth of Gleno. Surefoot has a sufficient burden in us—for we are waxing more corpulent every day—and ere long shall be a Silenus.

Ay, travel all the world over, and a human dwelling lovelier in its wildness shall you nowhere find, than the one that hides itself in the depth of its own beauty, beneath the last of the green knolls besprinkling Gleno, dropt down there in presence of the peacefulest bay of all Loch-Etive, in whose cloud-softened bosom it sees itself reflected among the congenial imagery of the skies. And, hark! a murmur as of swarming bees! 'Tis a Gaelic school—set down in this loneliest of all places, by that religious wisdom that rests not till the seeds of saving knowledge shall be sown over all the wilds. That grayhaired minister of God, whom all Scotland venerates, hath been here from the great city on one of his holy pilgrimages. And, lo! at his bidding, and that of his coadjutors in the heavenly work, a Schoolhouse has risen with its blue roof—the pure diamond-sparkling slates of Ballahulish—beneath a tuft of breeze-breaking trees. But whence come they—the little scholars—who are all murmuring there? We said that the shores of Loch-Etive were desolate. So seem they to the eye of Imagination, that loves to gather up a hundred scenes into one, and to breathe over the whole the lonesome spirit of one vast wilderness. But Imagination was a liar ever—a romancer and a dealer in dreams. Hers are the realms of fiction,

“A boundless contiguity of shade!”

But the land of truth is ever the haunt of the heart—there her eye reposes or expatiates, and what sweet, humble, and lowly visions arise before it, in a light that fadeth not away, but abideth for ever! Cottages, huts, shielings, she sees hidden—few and far between indeed—but all filled with Christian life—among the hollows of the hills—and up, all the way up the great glens—and by the shores of the loneliest lochs—and sprinkled, not so rarely, among the woods that enclose little fields and meadows of their own—all the way down—more animated—till children are seen gathering before their doors the shells of the contiguous sea.

Look and listen far and wide through a sunshiny day, over a rich wooded region, with hedgerows, single trees, groves, and forests, and yet haply not one bird is to be seen or heard—neither plumage nor song. Yet many a bright lyrist is there, all mute till the harbingers-hour of sunset, when all earth, air, and heaven, shall be ringing with one song. Almost even so is it with this mountain-wilderness. Small bright-haired, bright-eyed, bright-faced children, come stealing out in the morning from many hidden huts, each solitary in its own site, the sole dwelling on its own brae or its own dell. Singing go they one and all, alone or in small bands, trippingly along the wide moors; meeting into pleasant parties at cross paths, or at fords, till one stated hour sees them all gathered together, as now in the small Schoolhouse of Gleno, and the echo of the happy hum of the simple scholars is heard soft among the cliffs. But all at once the hum now ceases, and there is a hurry out of doors, and exulting cry; for the shadow of Hamish, with the roe on his shoulders, has passed the small lead-latticed window, and the Schoolroom has emptied itself on the green, which is now brightening with the young blossoms of life. “A roe—a roe—a roe!”—is still the chorus of their song; and the Schoolmaster himself, though educated at college for the kirk, has not lost the least particle of his passion for the chase, and with kindling eyes assists Hamish in laying down his burden, and gazes on the spots with a hunter's joy. We leave you to imagine his delight and his surprise when, at first hardly trusting his optics, he beholds CHRISTOPHER or SUREFOOT, and then, patting the sheltie on the shoulder, bows affectionately and respectfully to the Old Man, and while our hands grasp, takes a pleasure in repeating over and over again that celebrated surname—North—North—North.

After a brief and bright hour of glee and merriment, mingled with grave talk, nor marred by the sweet undisturbance of all those elves maddening on the Green around the Roe, we express a wish that the scholars may all again be gathered together in the Schoolroom, to undergo an examination by the Christian Philosopher of Buchanan Lodge. 'Tis in all things gentle, in nothing severe. All slates are instantly covered with numerals, and 'tis pleasant to see their skill in finest fractions, and in the wonder-working golden rule of three. And now the rustling of their manuals is like that of rainy breezes among the summer leaves. No fears are here that the Book of God will lose its sanctity by becoming too familiar to eye, lip, and hand. Like the sunlight in the sky, the light that shines there is for ever dear—and unlike any sunlight in any skies, never is it clouded, permanently bright, and undimmed before pious eyes by one single shadow. We ought, perhaps, to be ashamed, but we are not so—we are happy that not an urchin is there who is not fully better acquainted with the events and incidents recorded in the Old and New Testaments than ourselves; and think not that all these could have been so faithfully committed to memory without the perpetual operation of the heart.

Words are forgotten unless they are embalmed in spirit; and the air of the world, blow afterwards rudely as it may, shall never shrivel up one syllable that has been steeped into their souls by the spirit of the Gospel—felt by these almost infant disciples of Christ to be the very breath of God.

It has turned out one of the sweetest and serenest afternoons that ever breathed a hush over the face and bosom of August woods. Can we find it in our mind to think, in our heart to feel, in our hand to write that Scotland is now even more beautiful than in our youth! No—not in our heart to feel—but in our eyes to see—for they tell us it is the truth. The people have cared for the land which the Lord their God hath given them, and have made the wilderness to blossom like the rose. The same Arts that have raised their condition have brightened their habitation; Agriculture, by fertilizing the loveliness of the low-lying vales, has sublimed the sterility of the stupendous mountain heights—and the thundrous tides, flowing up the lochs, bring power to the corn-fields and pastures created on hillsides once horrid with rocks. The whole country laughs with a more vivid verdure—more pure the flow of her streams and rivers—for many a fen and marsh have been made dry, and the rainbow pictures itself on clearer cataracts.

The Highlands were, in our memory, overspread with a too dreary gloom. Vast tracts there were in which Nature herself seemed miserable; and if the heart find no human happiness to repose on, Imagination will fold her wings, or flee away to other regions, where in her own visionary world she may soar at will, and at will stoop down to the homes of this real earth. Assuredly the inhabitants are happier than they then were—*better off*—and therefore the change, whatever loss it may comprehend, has been a gain in good. Alas! poverty—penury—want—even of the necessities of life—are too often there still rife; but patience and endurance dwell there, heroic and better far, Christian—nor has Charity been slow to succour regions remote but not inaccessible, Charity acting in power delegated by Heaven to our National Councils. And thus we can think not only without sadness, but with an elevation of soul inspired by such example of highest virtue in humblest estate, and in our own sphere exposed to other trials be induced to follow it, set to us in many “a virtuous household, though exceeding poor.” What are all the poetical fancies about “mountain scenery,” that ever fluttered on the leaves of albums, in comparison with any scheme, however prosaic, that tends in any way to increase human comforts? The best sonnet that ever was written by a versifier from the South to the Crown of Benlomond, is not worth the worst pair of worsted stockings trotted in by a small Celt going with his dad to seek for a lost sheep among the snow-wreaths round his base. As for eagles, and ravens, and red-deer, “those magnificent creatures so stately and bright,” let them shift for themselves—and perhaps in spite of all our rhapsodies—the fewer of them the better—but among geese, and turkeys, and poultry, let propagation flourish—the fleecy

folk baa—and the hairy hordes bellow on a thousand hills. All the beauty and sublimity on earth—over the Four Quarters of the World—is not worth a straw if valued against a good harvest. An average crop is satisfactory; but a crop that soars high above an average—a golden year of golden ears—sends joy into the heart of heaven. No prating now of the degeneracy of the potato. We can sing now with our single voice, like a numerous chorus, of

“Potatoes drest both ways, both roasted and boiled;”

Sixty bolls to the acre on a field of our own of twenty acres—mealier than any meal—Perth reds—to the hue on whose cheeks dull was that on the face of the Fair Maid of Perth, when she blushed to confess to Burn-y-win’ that hand-over-hip he had struck the iron when it was hot, and that she was no more the Glover’s. Oh bright are potato blooms!—Oh green are potato-shaws!—Oh yellow are potato plums! But how oft are blighted summer hopes and broken summer promises! Spare not the shaw—heap high the mounds—that damp nor frost may dim a single eye; so that all winter through poor men may prosper, and spring see settings of such prolific vigour, that they shall yield a thousand-fold—and the sound of rumble-te-thumps be heard all over the land.

Let the people eat—let them have food for their bodies, and then they will have heart to care for their souls; and the good and the wise will look after their souls, with sure and certain hope of elevating them from their hovels to heaven, while prigs, with their eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, rail at railroads and all the other vile inventions of an utilitarian age to open up and expedite communication between the Children of the Mist and the Sons and Daughters of the Sunshine, to the utter annihilation of the sublime Spirit of Solitude. Be under no sort of alarm for Nature. There is some talk, it is true, of a tunnel through Cruachan to the Black Mount, but the general impression seems to be that it will be a *great bore*. A joint-stock company that undertook to remove Ben Nevis, is beginning to find unexpected obstructions. Feasible as we confess it appeared, the idea of draining Loch Lomond has been relinquished for the easier and more useful scheme of converting the Clyde from below Stonebyres, to above the Bannatyne Fall, into a canal—the chief lock being, in the opinion of the most ingenious speculators, almost ready-made at Corra Linn.

Shall we never be done with our soliloquy? It may be a little longish, for age is prolix—~~but~~ every whit as natural and congenial with circumstances, as Hamlet’s “to be or not to be, that is the question.” O beloved Albin! our soul yearneth towards thee, and we invoke a blessing on thy many thousand glens. The man who leaves a blessing on any one of thy solitary places, and gives expression to a good thought in presence of a Christian brother, is a missionary of the church. What uncomplaining and unrepining patience in thy solitary huts! What unshrinking endurance of physical pain and want, that might well shame the Stoic’s

philosophic pride! What calm contentment, akin to mirth, in so many lonesome households, hidden the greatest part of the year in mist and snow! What peaceful deathbeds, witnessed but by a few, a very few grave but tearless eyes! Ay, how many martyrdoms for the holy love and religion of nature, worse to endure than those of old at the stake, because protracted through years of sore distress, for ever on the very limit of famine, yet for ever far removed from despair! Such is the people among whom we seek to drop the books, whose sacred leaves are too often scattered to the winds, or buried in the dust of Pagan lands. Blessed is the fount from whose wisely managed munificence the small house of God will rise frequent in the wide and sea-divided wilds, with its humble associate, the heath-roofed school, in which, through the silence of nature, will be heard the murmuring voices of the children of the poor, instructed in the knowledge useful for time, and of avail for eternity.

We leave a loose sovereign or two to the Bible Fund; and remounting Surefoot, while our friend the school-master holds the stirrup tenderly to our toe, jog down the road which is rather alarmingly like the channel of a drought-dried torrent, and turning round on the saddle, send our farewell salutes to the gazing scholars, first, bonnet waved round our head, and then, that replaced, a kiss flung from our hand. Hamish, relieved of the roe, which will be taken up (how you shall by-and-by hear) on our way back to the Tent, is close at our side, to be ready should Sheltie stumble; O'Bronte as usual bounds in the van, and Ponto, Piro, and Basta, impatient for the next heather hill, keep close at our heels through the wood.

We do not admire that shooting-ground which resembles a poultry-yard. Grouse and barn-door fowls are constructed on opposite principles, the former being wild, and the latter tame creatures, when in their respective perfection. Of all dull pastimes, the dullest seems to us sporting in a preserve; and we believe that we share that feeling with the Grand Signior. The sign of a lonely wayside inn in the Highlands, ought not to be the Hen and Chickens. Some shooters, we know, sick of common sport, love slaughter. From sunrise to sunset of the First Day of the Moors, they must bag their hundred brace. That can only be done where pouts prevail, and cheepers keep chiding; and where you have half-a-dozen attendants to hand you double-barrels sans intermission, for a round dozen of hours spent in a perpetual fire. Commend us to a plentiful sprinkling of game; to ground which seems occasionally barren, and which it needs a fine instructed eye to traverse scientifically, and thereof to detect the latent riches. Fear and Hope are the Deities whom Christopher in his Sporting Jacket worships; and were they unpropitious, the Moors would lose all their witchcraft. We are a dead shot, but not always, for the forefinger of our right hand is the most fitful forefinger in all this capricious world. Like all performers in the Fine Arts, our execution is very uncertain; and though "*toujours pret*" is the impress on one side of our shield, "*hit and miss*" is that on the other, and often the more characteristic.

A gentleman ought not to shoot like a game-keeper, any more than at billiards to play like a marker, nor with four-in-hand ought he to tool his prads like the Portsmouth Dragsman. We choose to shoot like a philosopher as we are, and to preserve the golden mean in murder. We hold, with Aristotle, that all virtue consists in the middle, between the two extremes; and thus we shoot in a style equidistant from that of the gamekeeper on the one hand, and that of the bagman on the other, neither killing nor missing every bird; but, true to the spirit of the Aristotelian doctrine, leaning with a decided inclination towards the first rather than the second predicament. If we shoot too well one day, we are pretty sure to make amends for it by shooting just as much too ill another; and thus, at the close of the week, we can go to bed with a clear conscience. In short, we shoot like gentlemen, scholars, poets, philosophers as we are; and looking at us, you have a sight

"Of him who walks (rides) in glory and in joy,
Following his dog upon the mountain side,"—

a man evidently not shooting for a wager, and performing a match from the mean motive of avarice or ambition, but blazing away "at his own sweet will," and, without seeming to know it, making a great noise in the world. Such, believe us, is ever the mode in which true genius displays at once the earnestness and the modesty of its character.—But, Hamish—Hamish—Hamish—look with both thine eyes on yonder bank—yonder sunny bank, beneath the shade of that fantastic cliff's superincumbent shadow—and seest thou not basking there a miraculous amount of the right sort of feathers? They have packed, Hamish—they have packed, early as it yet is in the season; and the question is—*What shall we do?* We have it. Take up a position—Hamish—about a hundred yards in the rear—on yonder knoll—with the Colonel's Sweeper. Fire from the rest—mind, from the rest, Hamish—right into the centre of that bed of plumage, and we shall be ready, with Brown Bess and her sister, to pour in our quartette upon the remains as they rise—so that not escape shall one single feather. Let our coming "to the present" be your signal.—Bang! Whew!—what a flutter! Now take that—and that—and that—and that! Ha! Hamish—as at the springing of a mine, the whole company has perished. Count the dead. Twenty-one! Life is short—and by this compendious style we take Time by the forelock. But where the devil are the ducks? Oh, yes! with the deer at the Still. Bag, and be stirring. For the Salmon-pond is murmuring in our ear; and in another hour we must be at Inveraw. Who said that Cruachan was a steep mountain? Why, with a gentle, smooth, and easy slope, he dips his footsteps in the sea-salt waters of Loch-Etive's tide, as if to accommodate the old gentleman who, half-a-century ago, used to beard him in his pride on his throne of clouds. Heaven bless him!—he is a kind-hearted mountain, though his forehead be furrowed, and his aspect grim in stormy weather. A million memories "*o' auld lang syne*" revive, as almost "*smooth-sliding without step*" Surefoot travels through the

silvan haunts, by us beloved of yore, when every day was a dream, and every dream filled to overflowing with poetic visions that swarmed on every bough, on every bent, on every heather-bell, in every dewdrop, in every mote o' the sun, in every line of gossamer, all over greenwood and greensward, gray cliff, purple heath, blue loch, "wine-faced sea,"

"with locks divinely spreading,
Like sullen hyacinths in vernal hue."

and all over the sky, seeming then a glorious infinitude, where light, and joy, and beauty had their dwelling in calm and storm alike for evermore.

Heaven bless thee—with all her sun, moon, and stars! there thou art, dearest to us of all the lochs of Scotland—and they are all dear—mountain-crowned, cliff-guarded, isle-zoned, grove-girdled, wide-winding and far-stretching, with thy many-bayed banks and braes of brushwood, fern, broom, and heather, rejoicing in their huts and shielings, thou glory of Argyleshire, rill-and-river-fed, sea-arm-like, floating in thy majesty, magnificent Loch Awe!

Comparisons, so far from being odious, are always suggested to our hearts by the spirit of love. We behold Four Lochs—Loch Awe, before our bodily eyes, which sometimes sleep—Loch-Lomond, Windermere, Killarney, before those other eyes of ours that are waking ever. The longest is Loch Awe, which, from that bend below Sonnachan to distant Edderline, looks like a river. But cut off, with the soft scythe or sickle of fancy, twenty miles of the length of the mottled snake, who never coils himself up except in misty weather, and who is now lying outstretched in the sunshine, and the upper part, the head and shoulders, are of themselves a Loch. Pleasant are his many hills, and magnificent his one mountain. For you see but Cruachan. He is the master-spirit. Call him the noblest of Scotland's Kings. His subjects are princes; and gloriously they range around him, stretching high, wide, and far away, yet all owing visible allegiance to him their sole and undisputed sovereign. The setting and the rising sun do him homage. Peace loves—as now—to dwell within his shadow; but high among the precipices are the halls of the storms. Green are the shores as emerald. But the dark heather with its purple bloom sleeps in sombre shadow over wide regions of dusk, and there is an austere character in the cliffs. Moors and mosses intervene between holms and meadows, and those black spots are stacks of last year's peats—not huts, as you might think—but those other specks are huts, somewhat browner—few roofed with straw, almost all with heather—though the better houses are slated—nor is there in the world to be found slate of a more beautiful pale green colour than in the quarries of Ballahulish. The scene is vast and wild; yet so much beauty is interfused, that at such an hour as this, its character is almost that of loveliness; the rude and rugged is felt to be rural, and no more; and the eye gliding from the cottage gardens on its banks, to the islands on the bosom of the Loch, loses sight of the mighty masses heaved up to the heavens, while the heart forgets that they are there, in

its sweet repose. The dim-seen ruins of castle or religious house, secluded from all the stir that disturbed the shore, carries back our dreams to the olden time, and we awake from our reveries of "sorrows suffered long ago," to enjoy the apparent happiness of the living world.

Loch Lomond is a sea! Along its shores might you voyage in your swift schooner, with shifting breezes, all a summer's day, nor at sunset, when you dropped anchor, have seen half the beautiful wonders. It is many-isled; and some of them are in themselves little worlds, with woods and hills. Houses are seen looking out from among old trees, and children playing on the greensward that slopes safely into deep water, where in rushy havens are drawn up the boats of fishermen, or of woodcutters who go to their work on the mainland. You might live all your life on one of those islands, and yet be no hermit. Hundreds of small bays indent the shores, and some of a majestic character take a fine bold sweep with their towering groves, enclosing the mansion of a Colquhoun or a Campbell at enmity no more, or the turreted castle of the rich alien, who there finds himself as much at home as in his hereditary hall, Sassenach and Gaël now living in gentle friendship. What a prospect from the Point of Firkin. The loch in its whole length and breadth—the magnificent expanse unbroken, though bedropped, with unnumbered isles—and the shores diversified with jutting cape and far-shooting peninsula, enclosing sweet separate seclusions, each in itself a loch. Ships might be sailing here, the largest ships of war; and there is anchorage for fleets. But the clear course of the lovely Leven is rock-crossed and intercepted with gravelly shallows, and guards Loch-Lomond from the white-winged roamers that from all seas come crowding into the Firth of Clyde, and carry their streaming flags above the woods of Ardgowan. And there stands Ben. What cares he for all the multitude of other lochs his gaze commands—what cares he even for the salt-sea foam tumbling far away off into the ocean? All-sufficient for his love is his own loch at his feet. How serenely looks down the Giant! Is there not something very sweet in his sunny smile? Yet were you to see him frown—as we have seen him—your heart would sink; and what would become of you—if all alone by your own single self, wandering over the wide moor that glooms in utter houselessness between his corries and Glenfalloch—what if you were to hear the strange mutterings we have heard, as if moaning from an earthquake among quagmires, till you felt that the sound came from the sky, and all at once from the heart of night that had strangled day burst a shattering peal that might waken the dead—for Benlomond was in wrath, and vented it in thunder?

Perennially enjoying the blessing of a mild-er clime, and repaying the bounty of nature by beauty that bespeaks perpetual gratitude—merry as May, rich as June, shady as July, lustrous as August, and serene as September, for in her meet the characteristic charms of every season, all delightfully mingled by the

happy genius of the place commissioned to pervade the whole from heaven, most lovely yet most majestic, we breathed the music of thy name, and start in this sterner solitude at the sweet syllabing of Windermere, Windermere! Translucent thy waters as diamond without a flaw. Unstained from source to sea are all the streams soft issuing from their silver springs among those beautiful mountains. Pure are they all as dew—and purer look the white clouds within their breast. These are indeed the Fortunate Groves! Happy is every tree. Blest the "Golden Oak," which seems to shine in lustre of his own, unborrowed from the sun. Fairer far the flower-tangled grass of those wood-encircled pastures than any meads of Asphodel. Thou need'st no isles on thy heavenly bosom, for in the sweet confusion of thy shores are seen the images of many isles, fragments that one might dream had been gently loosened from the land, and had floated away into the lake till they had lost themselves in the fairy wilderness. But though thou need'st them not, yet hast thou, O Windermere! thine own steadfast and enduring isles—her called the Beautiful—and islets not far apart that seem born of her; for theirs the same expression of countenance—that of celestial calm—and, holiest of the sisterhood, one that still retains the ruins of an oratory, and bears the name of the Virgin Mother Mild, to whom prays the mariner when sailing, in the moonlight, along Sicilian seas.

Killarney! From the village of Cloghereen issued an uncouth figure, who called himself the "Man of the Mountain;" and pleased with Pan, we permitted him to blow his horn before us up to the top of Mangerton, where the Devil, 'tis believed, scooped out the sward beneath the cliffs into a Punch-bowl. No doubt he did, and the Old Potter wrought with fire. 'Tis the crater of an extinct volcano. Charles Fox, Weld says, and Wright doubts, swam the Pool. Why not? 'Tis not so cold as the Polar Sea. We swam across it—as Mulcocky, were he alive, but he is dead, could vouch; and felt braced like a drum. What a panorama! Our first feeling was one of grief that we were not an Irishman. We knew not where to fix our gaze. Surrounded by the dazzling bewilderment of all that multitudinous magnificence, the eye, as if afraid to grapple with the near glory—for such another day never shone from heaven—sought relief in the remote distance, and slid along the beautiful river Kenmare, insinuating itself among the recesses of the mountains, till it rested on the green glimmer of the far-off sea. The grandeur was felt, far off as it was, of that iron-bound coast. Coming round with an easy sweep, as the eyes of an eagle may do, when hanging motionless aloft he but turns his head, our eyes took in all the mighty range of the Reeks, and rested in awe on Carran Tual. Wild yet gentle was the blue aerial haze over the glimpses of the Upper Lake, where soft and sweet, in a girdle of rocks, seemed to be hanging, now in air and now in water—for all was strangely indistinct in the dim confusion—masses of green light that might be islands with their lovely trees;

but suddenly tipt with fire shone out the golden pinnacles of the Eagle's Nest; and as again they were tamed by cloud-shadow, the glow of Purple Mountain for a while enchained our vision, and then left it free to feast on the forests of Glena, till, wandering at the capricious will of fancy, it floated in delight over the woods of Mucruss, and long lost among the trembling imagery of the water, found lasting repose on the steadfast beauty of the silvan isle of Inisfallen.

But now for the black mass of rapid waters that, murmuring from loch to river, rush roaring through that rainbow-arch, and bathe the green woods in freshening spray-mist through a loveliest landscape, that steals along with its meadow-sprinkling trees close to the very shore of Loch-Etive, binding the two lochs together with a silvan band—her whose calmer spirit never knows the ebb or flow of tide, and her who fluctuates even when the skies are still with the swelling and subsiding tumult duly sent up into and recalled down from the silence of her inland solitude. And now for one pool in that river, called by eminence the Salmon Pool, whose gravelly depths are sometimes paved with the blue backs of the silver-scaled shiners, all strong as sunbeams, for a while reposing there, till the river shall blacken in its glee to the floods falling in Glen-Scrae and Glenorchy, and then will they shoot through the cataract—for 'tis all one fall between the lochs—passionate of the sweet fresh waters in which the Abbey-Isle reflects her one ruined tower, or Kilchurn, at all times dim or dark in the shadow of Cruachan, see his grim turrets, momentarily less grim, imaged in the tremblings of the casual sunshine. Sometimes they lie like stones, nor unless you stir them up with a long pole, will they stir in the gleam, more than if they were shadows breathed from trees when all winds are dead. But at other times, they are on feed; and then no sooner does the fly drop on the water in its blue and yellow gaudiness, (and oh! but the brown mallard wing is bloody—bloody!) than some snout sucks it in—some snout of some swine-necked shoulder-bender; and instantly—as by dexterously dropping your elbow you give him the butt, and strike the barb through his tongue—down the long reach of the river vista'd along that straight oak-avenue—but with clear space of greensward between wood and water—shoots the giant steel-stung in his fear, bounding blue-white into the air, and then down into the liquid element with a plunge as of a man, or rather a horse, till your heart leaps to your mouth, or, as the Greeks we believe used to say, to your nose, and you are seen galloping along the banks, by spectators in search of the picturesque, and ignorant of angling, supposed in the act of making your escape, with an incomprehensible weapon in both hands, from some rural madhouse.

Eh? eh? not in our hat—not in our waistcoat—not in our jacket—not in our breeches! By the ghost of Autolycus some pickpocket, while we were moralizing, has abstracted our Lascelles! we may as well tie a stone to each of our feet, and sink away from all sense of

misery in the Salmon Pool. Oh! that it had been our purse! Who cares for a dozen dirty sovereigns and a score of nasty notes? And what's the use of them to us now, or indeed at any time? And what's the use of this identical rod? Hang it, if a little thing would not make us break it! A multiplying reel indeed! The invention of a fool. The Tent sees not us again; this afternoon we shall return to Edinburgh. Don't talk to us of flies at the next village. There are no flies at the village—there is no village. O Beelzebub! O Satan! was ever man tempted as we are tempted? See—see a Fish—a fine Fish—an enormous Fish—leaping to insult us! Give us our gun that we may shoot him—no—no, dang guns—and dang this great clumsy rod! There—let it lie there for the first person that passes—for we swear never to angle more. As for the Awe we never liked it—and wonder what infatuation brought us here. We shall be made to pay for this yet—*whew!* there was a twinge—that big toe of ours we'll warrant is as red as fire, and we bitterly confess that we deserve the gout. *Och! och! och!*

But hark! whoop and hollo, and is that too the music of the hunter's horn! Reverberating among the woods a well-known voice salutes our ear, and there! bounds Hamish over the rocks like a chamois taking his pastime. Holding up our *LASCCELLES!* he places it with a few respectful words—hoping we have not missed it—and standing aloof—leaves us to our own reflections and our flies. Nor do those amount to remorse—nor these to more than a few dozens. Samson's strength having been restored—we speak of our rod, mind ye, not of ourselves—we lift up our downcast eyes, and steal somewhat ashamed a furtive glance at the trees and stones that must have overheard and overseen all our behaviour. We leave those who have been in any thing like the same predicament to confess—not publicly—there is no occasion for that—nor on their knees—but to their own consciences, if they have any, their grief and their joy, their guilt, and, we hope, their gratitude. Transported though they were beyond all bounds, we forgive them; for even those great masters of wisdom, the Stoics, were not infallible, nor were they always able to sustain, at their utmost strength, in practice the principles of their philosophy.

We are in a bloody mood, and shall not leave this Pool—without twenty mortal murders on our head. Jump away, *TROUTS!*—without any bowels of compassion for the race of flies. Devouring Ephemerals! Can you not suffer the poor insects to sport out their day? They must be insipid eating; but here are some savoury exceedingly—it is needless to mention their name—that carry *sauce piquante* in their tails. Do try the taste of this bobber—but any one of the three you please. There! hold fast *KIRBY!*—for that is a Whopper. A Mort! we did not suppose there were any in the river. Why, he springs as if he were a Fish! Go it again, Beauty. We ourselves could jump a bit in our day—nearly four times our own length—but we never could clear our own height, nor within half-a-foot of it; while

you—our Hearty—though not two feet long, certainly do the perpendicular to the tune of four—from tail-fin to water-surface—your snout being six nearer the sky than the foam-bells you break in your descent into your native element. Cayenne, mustard, and ketchup is our zest, and we shall assuredly eat you at sunset. Do you know the name of the Fool at the other end—according to Dr. Johnson? CHRISTOPHER NORTH. 'Tis an honour to be captured by the Old Knight of the Bloody Hand. You deserve to die such a death—for you keep in the middle of the current like a mort of mettle, and are not one of the skulkers that seek the side, and would fain take to the bush in hopes of prolonging life by foul entanglement. Bravely bored, Gil Morrice. There is as great difference in the moral qualities of the finny tribe as among us humans—and we have known some cowardly wretches escape our clutches by madly floundering in among floating weeds, or diving down among labyrinths of stone at the bottom, in paroxysms of fear that no tackle could withstand, not even Mackenzie's. He has broke his heart. Feeble as the dying gladiator, the arena swims around him, and he around the arena—till sailing with snout shore-ward, at sea in his own pool, he absolutely rolls in convulsions in between our very feet, and we, unprepared for such a mode of procedure, hastily retreating, discover that our joints are not so supple as of yore, and *play cloit* on our back among the gowans. O'Bronte tooths him by the cerebellum, and carries him up-brae in his mouth like a maw-kin. About six pounds.

Had we killed such a mort as is now in Magog, fifty years ago, we should not have rested a single instant after basketing him, before re-rushing, with a sanguinary aspect, to the work of death. Now carelessly diffused, we lie on our elbow, with our mild cheek on our palm, and keep gazing—but not lack-a-daisically—on the circumambient woods. Yes! circumambient—for look where we will, they accompany our ken like a peristrophic panorama. If men have been seen walking like trees, why may not trees be seen walking like men—in battalia—in armies—but oh! how peaceful the array; and as the slow silvan swimming away before our eyes subsides and settles, in that steadfast variegation of colouring, what a depth of beauty and grandeur, of joy and peace!

Phin! this rod is thy masterpiece. And what Gut! *There she has it!* Reel-music for ever! Ten fathom are run out already—and see how she shoots, Hamish,—such a somerset as that was never thrown from a spring-board. Just the size for strength and agility—twenty pound to an ounce—jimp weight, Hamish—ha! Harlequin art thou—or Columbine? Assuredly neither Clown nor Pantaloon. Now we have turned her ladyship's nose up the stream, her lungs, if she have any, must be beginning to labour, and we almost hear her snore. What! in the sulks already—sullen among the stones. But we shall make you mudge, madam, were we to tear the very tongue out of your mouth. Aye, once more down the middle to the tune of that spirited country-dance—"Off she goes!" Set corners, and

reel! The gaff, Hamish—the gaff! and the landing-net! For here is a shallow of the silver sand, spreading into the bay of a ford—and ere she recovers from her astonishment, here will we land her—with a strong pull, a long pull, and a pull altogether—just on the edge of the greensward—and then smite her on the shoulder, Hamish—and, to make assurance doubly sure, the net under her tail, and hoist her aloft in the sunshine, a glorious prize, dazzling the daylight, and giving a brighter verdure to the woods.

He who takes two hours to kill a fish—be its bulk what it may—is no man, and is not worth his meat, nor the vital air. The proportion is a minute to the pound. This rule were we taught by the “Best at Most” among British sportsmen—Scrope the Matchless on moor, mountain, river, loch, or sea; and with exquisite nicety, have we now carried it into practice. Away with your useless steelyards. Let us feel her teeth with our fore-finger, and then held out at arm’s length—so—we know by feeling, that she is, as we said soon as we saw her side, a twenty pounder to a drachm, and we have been true to time within two seconds. She has literally no head; but her snout is in her shoulders. That is the beauty of a fish—high and round shoulders, short waisted, no loins, but all body, and not long of terminating—the shorter still the better—in a tail sharp and pointed as Diana’s, when she is crescent in the sky.

And lo, and behold! there is Diana—but not crescent—for round and broad is she as the sun himself—shining in the south, with as yet a needless light—for daylight has not gone down in the west—and we can hardly call it gloaming. Chaste and cold though she seem, a nunlike luminary who has just taken the veil—a transparent veil of fine fleecy clouds—yet, alas! is she frail as of old, when she descended on the top of Latmos, to hold dalliance with Endymion. She has absolutely the appearance of being in the family way—and not far from her time. Lo! two of her children stealing from ether towards her feet. One on her right hand, and another on her left—the fairest daughters that ever charmed mother’s heart—and in heaven called stars. What a celestial trio the three form in the sky! The face of the moon keeps brightening as the lesser two twinkle into larger lustre; and now, though Day is still lingering, we feel that it is Night. When the one comes and when the other goes, what eye can note, what tongue can tell—but what heart feels not in the dewy hush divine, as the power of the beauty of earth decays over us, and a still dream descends upon us in the power of the beauty of heaven!

But hark! the regular twang and dip of oars coming up the river—and lo! indistinct in the distance, something moving through the moonshine—and now taking the likeness of a boat—a barge—with bonnetted heads leaning back at every flashing stroke—and, Hamish, list! a choral song in thine own dear native tongue! Sent hither by the Queen of the sea-fairies to bear back in state Christopher North to the Tent? No. ’Tis the big coble belonging to the tacksman of the Awe—and the crew are

going to pull her through the first few hours of the night—along with the flowing tide—up to Kinloch-Etive, to try a cast with their long net at the mouth of the river, now winding dim like a snake from King’s House beneath the Black Mount, and along the bays at the head of the Loch. A rumour that we were on the river had reached them—and see an awning of tartan over the stern, beneath which, as we sit, the sun may not smite our head by day, nor the moon by night. We embark—and descending the river like a dream, rapidly but stilly, and kept in the middle of the current by cunning helmsman, without aid of idle oar, all six suspended, we drop along through the silvan scenery, gliding serenely away back into the mountain gloom, and enter into the wider moonshine trembling on the wavy verdure of the foam-crested sea. May this be Loch-Etive? Yea—verily; but so broad here is its bosom, and so far spreads the billowy brightness, that we might almost believe that our bark was bounding over the ocean, and marching merrily on the main. Are we—into such a dream might fancy for a moment half beguile herself—rowing back, after a day among the savage islanders, to our ship lying at anchor in the offing, on a voyage of discovery round the world?

Where are all the dogs? Ponto, Piro, Basta, trembling partly with cold, partly with hunger, partly with fatigue, and partly with fear, among and below the seats of the rowers—with their noses somewhat uncomfortably laid between their fore-paws on the tarry timbers; but O’Bronte boldly sitting at our side, and wistfully eyeing the green swell as it heaves beautifully by, ready at the slightest signal to leap overboard, and wallow like a walrus in the brine, of which you might almost think he was born and bred, so native seems the element to the “Dowg o’ Dowgs.” Ay, these are seamews, O’Bronte, wheeling white as silver in the moonshine; but we *shall* not shoot them—no—no—no—we *will* not shoot you, ye images of playful peace, so fearlessly, nay, so lovingly attending our bark as it bounds over the breasts of the billows, in motion quick almost as your slowest flight, while ye linger around, and behind, and before our path, like fair spirits wiling us along up this great Loch, farther and farther through gloom and glimmer, into the heart of profounder solitude. On what errands of your own are ye winnowing your way, stooping ever and anon just to dip your wing-tips in the waves, and then up into the open air—the blue light filling this magnificent hollow—or seen glancing along the shadows of the mountains as they divide the Loch into a succession of separate bays, and often seem to block it up, till another moonlight reach is seen extending far beyond, and carries the imagination on—on—on—into inland recesses that seem to lose at last all connection with the forgotten sea. All at once the moon is like a ghost;—and we believe—Heaven knows why—in the authenticity of Ossian’s Poems.

Was there ever such a man as Ossian? We devoutly hope there was—for if so, then there were a prodigious number of fine fellows, besides his Bardship, who after their death figured

away as their glimmering ghosts, with noble effect, among the moonlight mists of the mountains. The poetry of Ossian has, it is true, since the days of Macpherson, in no way coloured the poetry of the island; and Mr. Wordsworth, who has written beautiful lines about the old Phantom, states that fact as an argument against its authenticity. He thinks Ossian, as we now possess him, no poet; and alleges that if these compositions had been the good things so many people have thought them, they would, in some way or other, have breathed their spirit over the poetical genius of the land. Who knows that they may not do so yet? The time may not have come. But must all true poetry necessarily create imitation, and a school of imitators? One sees no reason why it must. Besides, the life which the poetry of Ossian celebrates, has utterly passed away; and the poetry itself, good, bad, or indifferent, is so very peculiar, that to imitate it at all, you must almost transcribe it. That, for a good many years, was often done, but naturally inspired any other feeling than delight or admiration. But the simple question is, Do the poems of Ossian delight greatly and widely? We think they do. Nor can we believe that they would not still delight such a poet as Mr. Wordsworth. What dreariness overspreads them all! What a melancholy spirit shrouds all his heroes, passing before us on the cloud, after all their battles have been fought, and their tombs raised on the hill! The very picture of the old blind Hero-bard himself, often attended by the weeping virgins whom war has made desolate, is always touching, often sublime. The desert is peopled with lamenting mortals, and the mists that wrap them with ghosts, whose remembrances of this life are all dirge and elegy. True, that the images are few and endlessly reiterated; but that, we suspect, is the case with all poetry composed not in a philosophic age. The great and constant appearances of nature suffice, in their simplicity, for all its purposes. The poet seeks not to vary their character, and his hearers are willing to be charmed over and over again by the same strains. We believe that the poetry of Ossian would be destroyed by any greater distinctness or variety of imagery. And if, indeed, Fingal lived and Ossian sung, we must believe that the old bard was blind; and we suspect that in such an age, such a man would, in his blindness, think dreamily indeed of the torrents, and lakes, and heaths, and clouds, and mountains, moons and stars, which he had leapt, swam, walked, climbed, and gazed on in the days of his rejoicing youth. Then has he no tenderness—no pathos—no beauty. Alas for thousands of hearts and souls if it be even so! For then are many of their holiest dreams worthless all, and divinest melancholy a mere complaint of the understanding, which a bit of philosophical criticism will purge away, as the leech's phial does a disease of the blood.

Macpherson's Ossian, is it not poetry? Wordsworth says it is not—but Christopher North says it is—with all reverence for the King. Let its antiquity be given up—let such a state of society as is therein described be declared

impossible—let all the inconsistencies and violations of nature ever charged against it be acknowledged—let all its glaring plagiarisms from poetry of modern date inspire what derision they may—and far worse the perpetual repetition of its own imbecilities and inanities, wearying one down even to disgust and anger;—yet, in spite of all, are we not made to feel, not only that we are among the mountains, but to forget that there is any other world in existence, save that which glooms and glimmers, and wails and raves around us in mists and clouds, and storms, and snows—full of lakes and rivers, sea-intersected and sea-surrounded, with a sky as troublous as the earth—yet both at times visited with a mournful beauty that sinks strangely into the soul—while the shadowy life depicted there eludes not our human sympathies; nor yet, aerial though they be—so sweet and sad are their voices—do there float by as unbeloved, unpitied, or unhonoured—single, or in bands—the ghosts of the brave and beautiful when the few stars are dim, and the moon is felt, not seen, to be yielding what faint light there may be in the skies.

The boat in a moment is a bagpipe; and not only so, but all the mountains are bagpipes, and so are the clouds. All the bagpipes in the world are here, and they fill heaven and earth. 'Tis no exaggeration—much less a fiction—but the soul and body of truth. There Hamish stands stately at the prow; and as the boat hangs by midships on the very point that commands all the echoes, he fills the whole night with the "Campbells are coming," till the sky yells with the gathering as of all the Clans. His eyes are triumphantly fixed on ours to catch their emotions; his fingers cease their twinkling; and still that wild gathering keeps playing of itself among the mountains—fainter and fainter, as it is flung from cliff to cliff, till it dies away far—far off—as if in infinitude—sweet even and soft in its evanescence as some lover's lute.

We are now in the bay of Gleno. For though moonlight strangely alters the whole face of nature, confusing its most settled features, and with a gentle glamour blending with the green-sward what once was the gray granite, and investing with apparent woodiness what an hour ago was the desolation of herbless cliffs—yet not all the changes that wondrous nature, in ceaseless ebb and flow, ever wrought on her works, could metamorphose out of our recognition that Glen, in which, one night—long—long ago—

"In life's morning march, when our spirit was young!"

we were visited by a dream—a dream that shadowed forth in its inexplicable symbols the whole course of our future life—the graves—the tombs where many we loved are now buried—that churchyard, where we hope and believe that one day our own bones will rest.

But who shouts from the shore, Hamish—and now, as if through his fingers, sends forth a sharp shrill whistle that pierces the sky? Ah, ha! we ken his shadow in the light, with the roe on his shoulder. 'Tis the schoolmaster of Gleno, bringing down our quarry to the

boat—kilted, we declare, like a true Son of the Mist. The shore here is shelving but stony, and our prow is aground. But strong-spined and loined, and strong in their withers, are the McDougals of Lorn; and, wading up to the red hairy knees, he has flung the roe into the boat, and followed it himself like a deer-hound. So bend to your oars, my hearties—my heroes—the wind freshens, and the tide strengthens from the sea; and at eight knots an hour we shall sweep along the shadows, and soon see the lantern, twinkling as from a lighthouse, on the pole of our Tent.

In a boat, upon a great sea-arm, at night, among mountains, who would be so senseless, so soulless as to speak? The hour has its might,

"Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!" A sound there is in the sea-green swell, and the hollows of the rocks, that keep muttering, as their entrances feel the touch of the tide. But nothing beneath the moon can be more solemn, now that her aspect is so wan, and that some melancholy spirit has obscured the lustre of the stars. We feel as if the breath of old elegiac poetry were visiting our slumber. All is sad within us, yet why we know not; and the sadness is stranger as it is deeper after a day of almost foolish pastime, spent by a being who believes that he is immortal, and that this life is but the threshold of a life to come. Poor, puny, and paltry pastimes indeed are they all! But are they more so than those pursuits of which the moral poet has sung,

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave!"

Methinks, now, as we are entering into a sabler mass of shadow, that the doctrine of eternal punishment of sins committed in time—but—

"Here's a health to all good lasses,
Here's a health to all good lasses,
Pledge it merrily, fill your glasses;
Let the bumper toast go round,
Let the bumper toast go round!"

Rest on your oars, lads. Hamish! the queech! give each man a caulker, that his oar may send a bolder twang from its rollock, and our fish-coble walk the waves like a man-of-war's gig, with the captain on board, going ashore, after a long cruise, to meet his wife. Now she spins! and lo! lights at Kinloch-Etive, and beyond on the breast of the mountain, bright as Hesperus—the pole-star of our Tent!

Well, this is indeed the Londe of Faery! A car with a nag caparisoned at the water edge! On with the roe, and in with Christopher and the fish. Now, Hamish, hand us the Crutch. After a cast or two, which, may they be successful as the night is auspicious, your presence, gentlemen, will be expected in the Tent. Now, Hamish, handle thou the ribbons—alias the hair-tether—and we will touch him behind, should he linger, with a weapon that might

"Create a soul under the ribs of death."

Linger! why the lightning flies from his heels, as he carries us along a fine natural causeway, like Ossian's car-borne heroes. From the size

and state of the stones over which we make such a clatter, we shrewdly suspect that the parliamentary grant for destroying the old Highland torrent-roads has not extended its ravages to Glen-Etive. O'Bronte,

"Like panting Time, toils after us in vain;"

and the pointers are following us by our own scent, and that of the roe, in the distant darkness. Pull up, Hamish, pull up, or otherwise we shall overshoot our mark, and meet with some accident or other, perhaps a capsiz on Bachaille-Etive, or the Black Mount. We had no idea the circle of greensward in front of the Tent was so spacious. Why, there is room for the Lord Mayor of London's state-coach to turn with its eight horses, and that enormous ass, Parson Dillon, on the dickey. What could have made us think at this moment of London? Certes, the association of ideas is a droll thing, and also sometimes most magnificent. Dancing in the Tent, among strange figures! Celebration of the nuptials of some Arab chief, in an oasis in the Great Desert of Steopy Arabia! Heavens! look at Tickler! How he hauls the Hizzies! There is no time to be lost—he and the Admiral must not have all the sport to themselves; and, by and by, spite of age and infirmity, we shall show the Tent a touch of the Highland Fling. Hollo! you landloupers! Christopher is upon you—behold the Tenth Avatar incarnated in North.

But what Apparitions at the Tent-door salute our approach?

"Back step these two fair angels, half afraid
So suddenly to see the Griesly King!"

Goat-herdresses from the cliffs of Glencreran or Glenco, kilted to the knee, and not unconscious of their ankles, one twinkle of which is sufficient to bid "Begone dull care" for ever. One hand on a shoulder of each of the mountain-nymphs—sweet liberties—and then embraced by both, half in their arms, and half on their bosoms, was ever Old Man so pleasantly let down from triumphal car, on the soft surface of his mother-earth? Ay, there lies the Red-deer! and what heaps of smaller slain! But was there ever such a rush of dogs! We shall be extinguished. Down, dogs, down—nay, ladies and gentlemen, be seated—on one another's knees as before—we beseech you—we are but men like yourselves—and

"Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh! what were man!—a world without a sun!"

What it is to be the darling of gods and men, and women and children! Why, the very stars burn brighter—and thou, O Moon! art like the Sun. We foresee a night of dancing and drinking—till the mountain-dew melt in the lustre of morn. Such a day should have a glorious death—and a glorious resurrection. Hurra! Hurra!

THE MOORS FOR EVER! THE MOORS! THE MOORS!

HIGHLAND SNOW-STORM.

WHAT do you mean by original genius? By that fine line in the Pleasures of Hope—

"To muse on Nature with a poet's eye?"

Why—genius—one kind of it at least—is transfusion of self into all outward things. The genius that does that—naturally, but novelly—is original; and now you know the meaning of one kind of original genius. Have we, then, Christopher North, that gift? Have you? Yea, both of Us. Our spirits animate the insensate earth, till she speaks, sings, smiles, laughs, weeps, sighs, groans, goes mad, and dies. Nothing easier, though perhaps it is wicked, than for original genius like ours, or yours, to drive the earth to distraction. We wave our wizard hand thus—and lo! list! she is insane. How she howls to heaven, and how the maddened heaven howls back her frenzy! Two dreadful maniacs raging apart, but in communion, in one vast bedlam! The drift-snow spins before the hurricane, hissing like a nest of serpents left loose to torment the air. What fierce flakes! furies! as if all the wasps that ever stung had been revived, and were now careering part and parcel of the tempest. We are in a Highland Hut in the midst of mountains. But no land is to be seen any more than if we were in the middle of the sea. Yet a wan glare shows that the snow-storm is strangely shadowed by superincumbent cliffs; and though you cannot see, you *hear* the mountains. Rendings are going on, frequent, over your head—and all around the blind wilderness—the thunderous tumblings down of avalanches, mixed with the moanings, shriekings, and yellings of caves, as if spirits there were angry with the snow-drift choking up the fissures and chasms in the cliffs. Is that the creaking and groaning, and rocking and tossing of old trees, afraid of being uprooted and flung into the spate?

"Red comes the river down, and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water shrieks,"

more fearful than at midnight in this nightlike day—whose meridian is a total sun eclipse. The river runs by, bloodlike, through the snow—and, short as is the reach you can see through the flaky gloom, that short reach shows that all his course must be terrible—more and more terrible—as, gathering his streams like a chieftain his clan—erelong he will sweep shieling, and hut, and hamlet to the sea, undermining rocks, cutting mounds asunder, and blowing up bridges that explode into the air with a roar like that of cannon. You sometimes think you hear thunder, though you know that cannot be—but sublimer than thunder is the nameless noise so like that of agonized life—that eddies far and wide around—high and huge above—fear all the while being at the bottom of your heart—an objectless, dim dreary, undefinable fear, whose troubled

presence—if any mortal feeling be so—is sublime. Your imagination is troubled, and dreams of death, but of no single corpse, of no single grave. Nor fear you for yourself—for the Hut in which you thus enjoy the storm, is safer than the canopied cliff-calm of the eagle's nest; but your spirit is convulsed from its deepest and darkest foundations, and all that lay hidden there of the wild and wonderful, the pitiful and the strange, the terrible and pathetic, is now upturned in dim confusion, and imagination, working among the hoarded gatherings of the heart, creates out of them moods kindred and congenial with the hurricane, intensifying the madness of the heaven and the earth, till that which sees and that which is seen, that which hears and that which is heard, undergo alternate mutual transfiguration; and the blind Roaring Day—at once substance, shadow, and soul—is felt to be one with ourselves—the blended whole either the Live-Dead, or the Dead-Alive.

We are in a Highland Hut—if we called it a Shieling we did so merely because we love the sound of the word Shieling, and the image it at once brings to eye and ear—the rustling of leaves on a summer silvan bower, by simple art slightly changed from the form of the growth of nature, or the waving of fern on the turf-roof and turf-walls, all covered with wild-flowers and mosses, and moulded by one single season into a knoll-like beauty, beside its guardian birch-tree, insupportable to all evil spirits, but with its silvery stem and drooping tresses dear to the Silent People that won in the land of peace. Truly this is not the sweet Shieling-season, when, far away from all other human dwellings, on the dip of some great mountain, quite at the head of a day's-journey-long glen, the young herdsman, haply all alone, without one single being with him that has the use of speech, liveth for months retired far from kirk and cross—Luath his sole companion—his sole care the pasturing heids—the sole sounds he hears the croak of the raven on the cliff, or bark of the eagle in the sky. O sweet, solitary lot of lover! Haply in some oasis in the wilderness, some steadfast gleam of emerald light amid the hyacinthine-hue of the heather, that young herdsman hath pitched his tent, by one Good Spirit haunted morning, noon, and night, through the sunny, moonlight, starry months,—the Orphan-girl, whom years ago her dying father gave into his arms—the old blind soldier—knowing that the boy would shield her innocence when every blood-relation had been buried—now Orphan-girl no more, but growing there like a lily at the Shieling door, or singing within sweetlier than any bird—the happiest of all living things—her own Ronald's dark-haired Bride.

We are in a Highland Hut among a Highland Snow-storm—and all at once amidst the

roar of the merciless hurricane we remember the words of Burns—the peerless Peasant. Simple as they are, with what profound pathos are they charged!

“List’ning the doors an’ winnocks rattle;
I think me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O’ winter war,
And thro’ the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scour!

“Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o’ spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o’ thee?
Whar wilt thou cow’r thy chittering wing
An’ close thy e’e?”

“Ev’n you on murdering errands toil’d,
Lone from your savage homes exiled,
The blood-stain’d roost, and sheep-cot spoil’d,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.”

Burns is our Lowland bard—but poetry is poetry all over the world, when streamed from the life-blood of the human heart. So sang the Genius of inspired humanity in his bleak “auld clay-biggin,” on one of the braes of Coila, and now our heart responds the strain, high up among the Celtic cliffs, central among a sea of mountains hidden in a snow-storm that enshrouds the day. Ay—the one single door of this Hut—the one single “winnock,” does “rattle”—by fits—as the blast smites it, in spite of the white mound drifted hill-high all round the buried dwelling. Dim through the peat-reek cover the figures in tartan—fear has hushed the cry of the infant in the swinging cradle—and all the other imps are mute. But the household is thinner than usual at the meal-hour; and feet that loved to follow the red-deer along the bent, now fearless of pit-falls, since the first lour of morning light have been traversing the tempest. The shepherds, who sit all day long when summer hues are shining, and summer flowerets are blowing, almost idle in their plaids, beneath the shadow of some rock watching their flocks feeding above, around, and below, now expose their bold breasts to all the perils of the pastoral life. This is our Arcadia—a realm of wrath—wo—danger, and death. Here are bred the men whose blood—when the bagpipe blows—is prodigally poured forth on a thousand shores. The limbs strung to giant-force by such snows as these, moving in line of battle within the shadow of the Pyramids,

“Brought from the dust the sound of liberty,”

while the Invincible standard was lowered before the heroes of the Old Black Watch, and victory out of the very heart of defeat arose on “that thrice-repeated cry” that quails all foes that madly rush against the banners of Albyn. The storm that has frozen in his eyry the eagle’s wing, driven the deer to the comb beneath the cliffs, and all night imprisoned the wild-cat in his cell, hand in hand as is their wont when crossing a stream or flood, bands of Highlanders now face in its strongholds all over the ranges of mountains, come it from the wrathful inland or the more wrathful sea.

“They think upon the ourie cattle
And silly sheep,”

and man’s reason goes to the help of brute instinct.

How passing sweet is that other stanza, heard like a low hymn amidst the noise of the tempest! Let our hearts once more recite it—

“Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o’ spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o’ thee?
Whar wilt thou cow’r thy chittering wing,
An’ close thy e’e?”

The whole earth is for a moment green again—trees whisper—streamlets murmur—and the “merry month o’ spring” is musical through all her groves. But in another moment we know that almost all those sweet-singers are now dead—or that they “cow’r the chittering wing”—never more to flutter through the woodlands, and “close the e’e” that shall never more be reilluminated with love, when the Season of Nests is at hand, and bush, tree, and tower are again all a-twitter with the survivors of some gentler climate.

The poet’s heart, humanized to utmost tenderness by the beauty of its own merciful thoughts, extends its pity to the poor beasts of prey. Each syllable tells—each stroke of the poet-painter’s pencil depicts the life and sufferings of the wretched creatures. And then, feeling that such an hour all life is subject to one lot, how profound the pathos reflected back upon our own selves and our mortal condition, by these few simplest words—

“My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats!”

They go to help the “ourie cattle” and the “silly sheep;” but who knows that they are not sent on an errand of higher mercy, by Him whose ear has not been shut to the prayer almost frozen on the lips of them about to perish!—an incident long forgotten, though on the eve of that day on which the deliverance happened, so passionately did we all regard it, that we felt that interference providential—as if we had indeed seen the hand of God stretched down through the mist and snow from heaven. We all said that it would never leave our memory; yet all of us soon forgot it—but now while the tempest howls, it seems again of yesterday.

One family lived in Glencreran, and another in Glenco—the families of two brothers—seldom visiting each other on working-days—seldom meeting even on Sabbaths, for theirs was not the same parish-kirk—seldom coming together on rural festivals or holidays, for in the Highlands now these are not so frequent as of yore; yet all these sweet seldoms, taken together, to loving hearts made a happy many, and thus, though each family passed its life in its own home, there were many invisible threads stretched out through the intermediate air, connecting the two dwellings together—as the gossamer keeps floating from one tree to another, each with its own secret nest. And nestlike both dwellings were. That in Glenco, built beneath a treeless but high-heathered rock—lown in all storms—with greensward and garden on a slope down to a rivulet, the clearest of the clear, (oh! once wofully reddened!) and growing—so it seems in the mosses of its own roof, and the huge stones that overshadow it—out of the earth

That in Glencreran, more conspicuous, on a knoll among the pastoral meadows, midway between mountain and mountain, so that the grove which shelters it, except when the sun is shining high, is darkened by their meeting shadows, and dark indeed even in the sunshine, for 'tis a low but wide-armed grove of old oaklike pines. A little further down, and Glencreran is very silvan; but this dwelling is the highest up of all, the first you descend upon, near the foot of that wild hanging staircase between you and Glen-Etive; and except this old oaklike grove of pines, there is not a tree, and hardly a bush, on bank or brae, pasture or hay-field, though these are kept by many a rill there mingling themselves into one stream, in a perpetual lustre, that seems to be as native to the grass as its light is to the glow-worm. Such are the two Huts—for they are huts and no more—and you may see them still, if you know how to discover the beautiful sights of nature from descriptions treasured in your heart—and if the spirit of change, now nowhere at rest on the earth, not even in its most solitary places, have not swept from the scenes they beautified the humble but hereditary dwellings that ought to be allowed, in the fullness of the quiet time, to relapse back into the bosom of nature, through insensible and unperceived decay.

These Huts belonged to brothers—and each had an only child—a son and a daughter—born on the same day—and now blooming on the verge of youth. A year ago, and they were but mere children—but what wondrous growth of frame and spirit does nature at that season of life often present before our eyes! So that we almost see the very change going on between morn and morn, and feel that these objects of our affection are daily brought closer to ourselves, by partaking daily more and more in all our most sacred thoughts, in our cares and in our duties, and in knowledge of the sorrows as well as the joys of our common lot. Thus had these cousins grown up before their parent's eyes, Flora Macdonald—a name hallowed of yore—the fairest, and Rannald Cameron, the boldest of all the living flowers in Glenco and Glencreran. It was now their seventeenth birthday, and never had a winter sun smiled more serenely over a hush of snow. Flora, it had been agreed on, was to pass that day in Glencreran, and Rannald to meet her among the mountains, that he might bring her down the many precipitous passes to his parent's hut. It was the middle of February, and the snow had lain for weeks with all its drifts unchanged, so calm had been the weather, and so continued the frost. At the same hour, known by horologe on the cliff touched by the finger of dawn, the happy creatures left each their own glen, and mile after mile of the smooth surface glided away past their feet, almost as the quiet water glides by the little boat that in favouring breezes walks merrily along the sea. And soon they met at the trying-place—a bank of birch-trees beneath a cliff that takes its name from the Eagles.

On their meeting seemed not to them the whole of nature suddenly inspired with joy

and beauty? Insects unheard by them before, hummed and glittered in the air—from tree roots, where the snow was thin, little flowers, or herbs flower-like, now for the first time were seen looking out as if alive—the trees themselves seemed budding as if it were already spring—and rare as in that rocky region are the birds of song, a faint trill for a moment touched their ears, and the flutter of a wing, telling them that somewhere near there was preparation for a nest. Deep down beneath the snow they listened to the tinkle of rills unreached by the frost—and merry, thought they, was the music of these contented prisoners. Not summer's self, in its deepest green, so beautiful had ever been to them before, as now the mild white of Winter; and as their eyes were lifted up to heaven, when had they ever seen before a sky of such perfect blue, a sun so gentle in its brightness, or altogether a week-day in any season so like a Sabbath in its stillness, so like a holyday in its joy! Lovers were they—although as yet they scarcely knew it; for from love only could have come such bliss as now was theirs, a bliss that while it beautified was felt to come from the skies.

Flora sang to Rannald many of her old songs to those wild Gaelic airs that sound like the sighing of winds among fractured cliffs, or the branches of storm-tossed trees when the subsiding tempest is about to let them rest. Monotonous music! but irresistible over the heart it has once awakened and enthralled, so sincere seems to be the mournfulness it breathes—a mournfulness brooding on the same note that is at once its natural expression and its sweetest aliment—of which the singer never wearyth in her dream, while her heart all the time is haunted by all that is most piteous, by the faces of the dead in their paleness returning to the shades of life, only that once more they may pour from their fixed eyes those strange showers of unaccountable tears!

How merry were they between those mournful airs! How Flora trembled to see her lover's burning brow and flashing eyes, as he told her tales of great battles fought in foreign lands, far across the sea—tales which he had drunk in with greedy ears from the old heroes scattered all over Lochaber and Badenoch, on the brink of the grave still garrulous of blood!

"The sun sat high in his meridian tower,"

but time had not been with the youthful lovers, and the blessed beings believed that 'twas but a little hour since beneath the Eagle Cliff they had met in the prime of the morn!

The boy starts to his feet—and his keen eye looks along the ready rifle—for his sires had all been famous deer-stalkers, and the passion of the chase was hereditary in his blood. Lo! a deer from Dalness, hound-driven or sullenly astray, slowly bearing his antlers up the glen, then stopping for a moment to snuff the air, and then away—away! The rifle-shot rings dully from the scarce echoing snow-cliffs, and the animal leaps aloft, struck by a certain but not sudden death-wound. Oh! for Fingal now to pull him down like a wolf! But labouring and lumbering heavily along, the snow spotted

as he bounds with blood, the huge animal at last disappears round some rocks at the head of the glen. "Follow me, Flora!" the boy-hunter cries—and flinging down their plaids, they turn their bright faces to the mountain, and away up the long glen after the stricken deer. Fleet was the mountain-girl—and Ranald, as he ever and anon looked back to wave her on, with pride admired her lightsome motion as she bounded along the snow. Redder and redder grew that snow, and more heavily trampled as they winded round the rocks. Yonder is the deer staggering up the mountain, not half a mile off—now standing at bay, as if before his swimming eyes came Fingal, the terror of the forest, whose howl was known to all the echoes, and quailed the herd while their antlers were yet afar off. "Rest, Flora! rest! while I fly to him with my rifle—and shoot him through the heart!"

Up—up—the interminable glen, that kept winding and winding round many a jutting promontory, and many a castellated cliff, the red-deer kept dragging his gore-oozing bulk, sometimes almost within, and then, for some hundreds of yards, just beyond rifle-shot; while the boy, maddened by the chase, pressed forwards, now all alone, nor any more looking behind for Flora, who had entirely disappeared; and thus he was hurried on for miles by the whirlwind of passion—till at last he struck the noble quarry, and down sank the antlers in the snow, while the air was spurned by the convulsive beatings of feet. Then leaped Ranald upon the Red-deer like a beast of prey, and lifted up a look of triumph to the mountain tops.

Where is Flora? Her lover has forgotten her—and he is alone—nor knows it—he and the Red-deer—an enormous animal—fast stifening in the frost of death.

Some large flakes of snow are in the air, and they seem to waver and whirl, though an hour ago there was not a breath. Faster they fall and faster—the flakes are almost as large as leaves—and overhead whence so suddenly has come that huge yellow cloud! "Flora, where are you? where are you, Flora?" and from the huge hide the boy leaps up, and sees that no Flora is at hand. But yonder is a moving speck far off upon the snow! 'Tis she—'tis she—and again Ranald turns his eyes upon the quarry, and the heart of the hunter burns within him like a new-stirred fire. Shrill as the eagle's cry disturbed in his eyry, he sends a shout down the glen—and Flora, with cheeks pale and bright by fits, is at last at his side. Panting and speechless she stands—and then dizzily sinks on his breast. Her hair is ruffled by the wind that revives her, and her face all moistened by the snow-flakes, now not falling but driven—for the day has undergone a dismal change, and all over the skies are now lowering savage symptoms of a fast-coming night-storm.

Bare is poor Flora's head, and sadly drenched her hair, that an hour or two ago glittered in the sunshine. Her shivering frame misses now the warmth of the plaid, which almost no cold can penetrate, and which had kept the vital current flowing freely in many a bitter blast. What would the miserable boy give now for the coverings lying far away, which, in

his foolish passion, he flung down to chase that fatal deer! "Oh! Flora! if you would not fear to stay here by yourself—under the protection of God, who surely will not forsake you—soon will I go and come from the place where our plaids are lying; and under the shelter of the deer we may be able to outlive the hurricane—you wrapt up in them—and folded—O my dearest sister—in my arms!"—"I will go with you down the glen, Ranald!" and she left his breast—but, weak as a day-old lamb, tottered and sank down on the snow. The cold—intense as if the air were ice—had chilled her very heart, after the heat of that long race; and it was manifest that here she must be for the night—to live or to die. And the night seemed already come, so full was the lift of snow; while the glimmer every moment became gloomier, as if the day were expiring long before its time. Howling at a distance down the glen was heard a sea-born tempest from the Linnhe-Loch, where now they both knew the tide was tumbling in, bringing with it sleet and snow blasts from afar; and from the opposite quarter of the sky, an inland tempest was raging to meet it, while every lesser glen had its own uproar, so that on all hands they were environed with death.

"I will go—and, till I return, leave you with God."—"Go, Ranald!" and he went and came—as if he had been endowed with the raven's wings!

Miles away—and miles back had he flown—and an hour had not been with his going and his coming—but what a dreary wretchedness meanwhile had been hers! She feared that she was dying—that the cold snow-storm was killing her—and that she would never more see Ranald, to say to him farewell. Soon as he was gone, all her courage had died. Alone, she feared death, and wept to think how hard it was for one so young thus miserably to die. He came—and her whole being was changed. Folded up in both the plaids—she felt resigned. "Oh! kiss me—kiss me, Ranald—for your love—great as it is—is not as my love. You must never forget me, Ranald—when your poor Flora is dead."

Religion with these two young creatures was as clear as the light of the Sabbath-day—and their belief in heaven just the same as in earth. The will of God they thought of just as they thought of their parents' will—and the same was their loving obedience to its decrees. If she was to die—supported now by the presence of her brother—Flora was utterly resigned; if she were to live, her heart imaged to itself the very forms of her grateful worship. But all at once she closed her eyes—ceased breathing—and, as the tempest howled and rumbled in the gloom that fell around them like blindness, Ranald almost sank down, thinking that she was dead.

"Wretched sinner that I am!—my wicked madness brought her here to die of cold!" And he smote his breast—and tore his hair—and feared to look up, lest the angry eye of God were looking on him through the storm.

All at once, without speaking a word, Ranald lifted Flora in his arms, and walked away up the glen—here almost narrowed into a

pass. Distraction gave him supernatural strength, and her weight seemed that of a child. Some walls of what had once been a house, he had suddenly remembered, were but a short way off—whether or not they had any roof, he had forgotten; but the thought even of such shelter seemed a thought of salvation. There it was—a snow-drift at the opening that had once been a door—snow up the holes once windows—the wood of the roof had been carried off for fuel, and the snow-flakes were falling in, as if they would soon fill up the inside of the ruin. The snow in front was all trampled as if by sheep; and carrying in his burden under the low lintel, he saw the place was filled with a flock that had foreknown the hurricane, and that all huddled together looked on him as on the shepherd come to see how they were faring in the storm.

And a young shepherd he was, with a lamb apparently dying in his arms. All colour—all motion—all breath seemed to be gone—and yet something convinced his heart that she was yet alive. The ruined hut was roofless, but across an angle of the walls some pine-branches had been flung as a sort of shelter for the sheep or cattle that might repair thither in cruel weather—some pine-branches left by the woodcutters who had felled the few trees that once stood at the very head of the glen. Into that corner the snow-drift had not yet forced its way, and he sat down there with Flora in the cherishing of his embrace, hoping that the warmth of his distracted heart might be felt by her who was as cold as a corpse. The chill air was somewhat softened by the breath of the huddled flock, and the edge of the cutting wind blunted by the stones. It was a place in which it seemed possible that she might revive—miserable as it was with mire-mixed snow—and almost as cold as one supposes the grave. And she did revive—and under the half-open lids the dim blue appeared to be not yet life-deserted. It was yet but the afternoon—nightlike though it was—and he thought, as he breathed upon her lips, that a faint red returned, and that they felt the kisses he dropt on them to drive death away.

“Oh! father, go seek for Ranald, for I dreamt to-night he was perishing in the snow!”—“Flora, fear not—God is with us.”—“Wild swans, they say, are come to Loch-Phoil—let us go, Ranald, and see them—but no rifle—for why kill creatures said to be so beautiful?” Over them where they lay, bended down the pine-branch roof, as if it would give way beneath the increasing weight;—but there it still hung—though the drift came over their feet and up to their knees, and seemed stealing upwards to be their shroud. “Oh! I am overcome with drowsiness, and fain would be allowed to sleep. Who is disturbing me—and what noise is this in our house?”—“Fear not—fear not, Flora—God is with us.”—“Mother! am I lying in your arms? My father surely is not in the storm! Oh! I have had a most dreadful dream!” and with such mutterings as these Flora relapsed again into that perilous sleep—which soon becomes that of death.

Night itself came—but Flora and Ranald knew it not—and both lay now motionless in

one snow-shroud. Many passions—though earth-born, heavenly all—pity, and grief, and love, and hope, and at last despair—had prostrated the strength they had so long supported; and the brave boy—who had been for some time feeble as a very child after a fever—with a mind confused and wandering, and in its perplexities sore afraid of some nameless ill, had submitted to lay down his head beside his Flora’s, and had soon become like her insensible to the night and all its storms!

Bright was the peat-fire in the hut of Flora’s parents in Gléncoco—and they were among the happiest of the humble happy, blessing this the birthday of their blameless child. They thought of her singing her sweet songs by the fireside of the hut in Glencreran—and tender thoughts of her cousin Ranald were with them in their prayers. No warning came to their ears in the sigh or the howl; for Fear it is that creates its own ghosts, and all its own ghostlike visitings, and they had seen their Flora in the meekness of the morning, setting forth on her way over the quiet mountains, like a fawn to play. Sometimes, too, Love, who starts at shadows as if they were of the grave, is strangely insensible to realities that might well inspire dismay. So was it now with the dwellers in the hut at the head of Glencreran. Their Ranald had left them in the morning—night had come, and he and Flora were not there—but the day had been almost like a summer-day, and in their infatuation they never doubted that the happy creatures had changed their minds, and that Flora had returned with him to Gléncoco. Ranald had laughingly said, that haply he might surprise the people in that glen by bringing back to them Flora on her birthday—and strange though it afterwards seemed to her to be, that belief prevented one single fear from touching his mother’s heart, and she and her husband that night lay down in untroubled sleep.

And what could have been done for them, had they been told by some good or evil spirit that their children were in the clutches of such a night? As well seek for a single bark in the middle of the misty main! But the inland storm had been seen brewing among the mountains round King’s House, and hut had communicated with hut, though far apart in regions where the traveller sees no symptoms of human life. Down through the long cliff-pass of Mealanumy, between Buchael-Etive and the Black-Mount, towards the lone House of Dalness, that lives in everlasting shadows, went a band of shepherds, trampling their way across a hundred frozen streams. Dalness joined its strength—and then away over the drift-bridged chasms toiled that Gathering, with their sheep-dogs scouring the loose snows—in the van, Fingal the Red Reaver, with his head aloft on the look-out for deer, grimly eyeing the Correi where last he tasted blood. All “plaided in their tartan array,” these shepherds laughed at the storm—and hark! you hear the bag-pipe play—the music the Highlanders love both in war and in peace.

“They think then of the ourie cattle,
And silly sheep;”

and though they ken ’twill be a moonless night

—for the snow-storm will sweep her out of heaven—up the mountain and down the glen they go, marking where flock and herd have betaken themselves, and now, at night-fall, unafraid of that blind hollow, they descend into the depth where once stood the old Grove of Pines. Following the dogs, who know their duties in their instinct, the band, without seeing it, are now close to that ruined hut. Why bark the sheep-dogs so—and why howls Fingal, as if some spirit passed athwart the night? He scents the dead body of the boy who so often had shouted him on in the forest, when the antlers went by! Not dead—nor dead she who is on his bosom. Yet life in both is frozen—and will the iced blood in their veins ever again be thawed? Almost pitch-dark is the roofless ruin—and the frightened sheep know not what is the terrible Shape that is howling there. But a man enters, and lifts up one of the bodies, giving it into the arms of them at the doorway—and then lifts up the other; and, by the flash of a rifle, they see that it is Ranald Cameron and Flora Macdonald, seemingly both frozen to death. Some of those reeds that the shepherds burn in their huts are kindled, and in that small light they are assured that such are the corpses. But that noble dog knows that death is not there—and licks the face of Ranald, as if he would restore life to his eyes. Two of the shepherds know well how to fold the dying in their plaids—how gentlest to carry them along; for they had learnt it on the field of victorious battle, when, without stumbling over the dead and wounded, they bore away the shattered body—yet living—of the youthful warrior, who had shown that of such a Clan he was worthy to be the Chief.

The storm was with them all the way down the glen—nor could they have heard each other's voices had they spoke—but mutely they shifted the burden from strong hand to hand—thinking of the Hut in Glenco, and of what would be felt there on their arrival with the dying or dead. Blind people walk through what to them is the night of crowded day-streets—unpausing turn round corners—unhesitatingly plunge down steep stairs—wind their way fearlessly through whirlwinds of life—and reach in their serenity, each one unharmed, his own obscure house. For God is with the blind. So is he with all who walk on works of mercy. This saving band had no fear—and therefore there was no danger—on the edge of the pitfall or the cliff. They knew the countenances of the mountains shown momentarily by ghastly gleamings through the fitful night, and the hollow sound of each particular stream beneath the snow at places where in other weather there was a pool or a waterfall. The dip of the hills, in spite of the drifts, familiar to their feet, did not deceive them now; and then, the dogs in their instinct were guides that erred not, and as well as the shepherds knew it themselves did Fingal know that they were anxious to reach Glenco. He led the way, as if he were in moonlight; and often stood still when they were shifting their burden, and whined as if in grief. He knew where the bridges were—stones or logs; and he rounded the marshes where at springs the

wild-fowl feed. And thus Instinct, and Reason, and Faith conducted the saving band along—and now they are at Glenco—and at the door of the Hut.

To life were brought the dead; and there at midnight sat they up like ghosts. Strange seemed they—for a while—to each other's eyes—and at each other they looked as if they had forgotten how dearly once they loved. Then as if in holy fear they gazed on each other's faces, thinking that they had awoke together in heaven. "Flora!" said Ranald—and that sweet word, the first he had been able to speak, reminded him of all that had passed, and he knew that the God in whom they had put their trust had sent them deliverance. Flora, too, knew her parents, who were on their knees—and she strove to rise up and kneel down beside them—but she was powerless as a broken reed—and when she thought to join them in thanksgiving, her voice was gone. Still as death sat all the people in the hut—and one or two who were fathers were not ashamed to weep.

Who were they—the solitary pair—all alone by themselves save a small image of her on whose breast it lay—whom—seven summers after—we came upon in our wanderings, before their Shieling in Correi-Vollach at the foot of Ben Chrulas, who sees his shadow in a hundred lochs? Who but Ranald and Flora!

* * * * *

Nay, dry up—Daughter of our Age, dry up thy tears! and we shall set a vision before thine eyes to fill them with unmoistened light.

Of before have those woods and waters—those clouds and mountains—that sun and sky, held thy spirit in Elysium,—thy spirit, that then was disembodied, and living in the beauty and the glory of the elements. 'Tis WINDERMERE—WINDERMERE! Never canst thou have forgotten those more than fortunate—those thrice-blessed Isles! But when last we saw them within the still heaven of thy smiling eyes, summer suns had overloaded them with beauty, and they stooped their flowers and foliage down to the blushing, the burning deep, that glowed in its transparency with other groves as gorgeous as themselves, the whole mingling mass of reality and of shadow forming one creation. But now, lo! Windermere in Winter. All leafless now the groves that girdled her as if shifting rainbows were in love perpetually letting fall their colours on the Queen of Lakes. Gone now are her banks of emerald that carried our calm gazings with them, sloping away back into the cerulean sky. Her mountains, shadowy in sunshine, and seeming restless as seas, where are they now?—The cloud-cleaving cliffs that shot up into the blue region where the buzzard sailed? All gone. But mourn not for that loss. Accustom thine eye—and through it thy soul to that transcendent substitution, and deeply will they be reconciled. Sawest thou ever the bosom of the Lake hushed into profounder rest? No white-winged pinnace glides through the sunshine—no clanking oar is heard leaving or approaching cape, point, or bay—no music of voice, stop, or string, wakens the sleeping echoes. How strangely dim and confused on the water the fantastic frostwork

imagery, yet more steadfastly hanging there than ever hung the banks of summer! For all one sheet of ice, now clear as the Glass of Glamoury in which that Lord of old beheld his Geraldine—is Windermere, the heaven-loving and the heaven-beloved. Not a wavelet murmurs in all her bays, from the silvan Brathay to where the southern straits narrow into a river—now chained too, the Leven, on his silvan course towards that perilous Estuary afar off raging on its wreck-strewn sands. The frost came after the last fall of snow—and not a single flake ever touched that surface; and now that you no longer miss the green twinkling of the large July leaves, does not imagination love those motionless frozen forests, cold but not dead, serene but not sullen, inspirative in the strangeness of their apparelling of wild thoughts about the scenery of foreign climes, far away among the regions of the North, where Nature works her wonders aloof from human eyes, and that wild architect Frost, during the absence of the sun, employs his night of months in building and dissolving his ice-palaces, magnificent beyond the reach of any power set to work at the bidding of earth's crowned and sceptred kings? All at once a hundred houses, high up among the hills, seem on fire. The setting sun has smitten them, and the snow-tracts are illuminated by harmless conflagrations. Their windows are all lighted up by a lurid splendour, in its strong suddenness sublime. But look, look, we beseech you, at the sun—the sunset—the sunset region—and all that kindred and corresponding heaven, effulgent, where a minute ago lay in its cold glitter the blue bosom of the lake. Who knows the laws of light and the perpetual miracle of their operation? God—not thou. The snow-mountains are white no more, but gorgeous in their colouring as the clouds. Lo! Pavey-Ark—magnificent range of cliffs—seeming to come forward, while you gaze!—How it glows with a rosy light, as if a flush of flowers decked the precipice in that delicate splendour! Langdale-Pikes, methinks, are tinged with finest purple, and the thought of violets is with us as we gaze on the tinted bosom of the mountains dearest to the setting sun. But that long broad slip of orange-coloured sky is yellowing with its reflection almost all the rest of our Alps—all but yon stranger—the summit of some mountain belonging to another region—ay—the Great Gabel—silent now as sleep—when last we clomb his cliffs, thundering in the mists of all his cataracts. In his shroud he stands pallid like a ghost. Beyond the reach of the setting sun he lours in his exclusion from the rejoicing light, and imagination, personifying his solitary vastness into forsaken life, pities the doom of the forlorn Giant. Ha! just as the eye of day is about to shut, one smile seems sent afar to that lonesome mountain, and a crown of crimson encompasses his forehead.

On which of the two sunsets art thou now gazing? Thou who art to our old loving eyes so like the “mountain nymph, sweet Liberty!” On the sunset in the heaven—or the sunset in the lake? The divine truth is—O Daughter of our Age!—that both sunsets are but visions

of our own spirits. Again both are gone from the outward world—and naught remains but a forbidden frown of the cold bleak snow. But imperishable in thy imagination will both sunsets be—and though it will sometimes retire into the recesses of thy memory, and lie there among the unsuspected treasures of forgotten imagery that have been unconsciously accumulating there since first those gentle eyes of thine had perfect vision given to their depths—yet mysteriously brought back from vanishment by some one single silent thought, to which power has been yielding over that bright portion of the Past, will both of them sometimes reappear to thee in solitude—or haply when in the very heart of life. And then surely a few tears will fall for sake of him—then no more seen—by whose side thou stoodest, when that double sunset enlarged thy sense of beauty, and made thee in thy father's eyes the sweetest—best—and brightest poetess—whose whole life is musical inspiration—ode, elegy, and hymn, sung not in words but in looks—sigh-breathed or speechlessly distilled in tears flowing from feelings the farthest in this world from grief.

So much, though but little, for the beautiful—with, perhaps, a tinge of the sublime. Are the two emotions different and distinct—thinkst thou, O metaphysical critic of the gruesome countenance—or modifications of one and the same? “Tis a puzzling question—and we, Sphinx, might wait till doomsday, before you, Œdipus, could solve the enigma. Certainly a Rose is one thing and Mount Ætna is another—an antelope and an elephant—an insect and a man-of-war, both sailing in the sun—a little lucid well in which the fairies bathe, and the Polar Sea in which Leviathan is “wallowing unwieldy, enormous in his gait”—the jewelled finger of a virgin bride, and grim Saturn with his ring—the upward eye of a kneeling saint, and a comet, “that from his horrid hair shakes pestilence and war.” But let the rose bloom on the mouldering ruins of the palace of some great king—among the temples of Balbec or Syrian Tadmor—and in its beauty, methinks, ’twill be also sublime. See the antelope bounding across a raging chasm—up among the region of eternal snows on Mont Blanc—and deny it, if you please—but assuredly we think that there is sublimity in the fearless flight of that beautiful creature, to whom nature grudged not wings, but gave instead the power of plumes to her small delicate limbs, unfractured by alighting among the pointed rocks. All alone, by your single solitary self, in some wide, lifeless desert, could you deny sublimity to the unlooked-for hum of the tiniest insect, or to the sudden shiver of the beauty of his gauze-wings! Not you, indeed. Stooping down to quench your thirst in that little lucid well where the fairies bathe, what if you saw the image of the evening star shining in some strange subterranean world? We suspect that you would hold in your breath, and swear devoutly that it was sublime. Dead on the very evening of her marriage day is that virgin bride whose delicacy was so beautiful—and as she lies in her white wedding garments that serve for a shroud—that emblem of eter-

nity and of eternal love, the ring, upon her finger—with its encased star shining brightly now that her eyes, once stars, are closed—would, methinks, be sublime to all Christian hearts. In comparison with all these beautiful sublimities, Mount Ætna, the elephant, the man-of-war, Leviathan swimming the ocean-stream, Sa-

turn with his ring, and with his horrid hair the comet—might be all less than nothings. Therefore beauty and sublimity are twin feelings—one and the same birth—seldom inseparable;—if you still doubt it, become a fire-shipper, and sing your morning and evening orisons to the rising and the setting sun.

THE HOLY CHILD.

THIS House of ours is a prison—this Study of ours a cell. Time has laid his fetters on our feet—fethers fine as the gossamer, but strong as Samson's ribs, silken-soft to wise submission, but to vain impatience galling as cankered wound that keeps ceaselessly eating into the bone. But while our bodily feet are thus bound by an inevitable and inexorable law, our mental wings are free as those of the lark, the dove, or the eagle—and they shall be expanded as of yore, in calm or tempest, now touching with their tips the bosom of this dearly beloved earth, and now aspiring heavenwards, beyond the realms of mist and cloud, even unto the very core of the still heart of that otherwise unapproachable sky which graciously opens to receive us on our flight, when, disencumbered of the burden of all grovelling thoughts, and strong in spirituality, we exult to soar

"Beyond this visible diurnal sphere,"

nearing and nearing the native region of its own incomprehensible being.

Now touching, we said, with their tips the bosom of this dearly beloved earth! How sweet that attraction to imagination's wings! How delightful in that lower flight to skim along the green ground, or as now along the soft-bosomed beauty of the virgin snow! We were asleep all night long—sound asleep as children—while the flakes were falling, "and soft as snow on snow" were all the descendings of our untroubled dreams. The moon and all her stars were willing that their lustre should be veiled by that peaceful shower; and now the sun, pleased with the purity of the morning earth, all white as innocence, looks down from heaven with a meek unmelting light, and still leaves undissolved the stainless splendour. There is frost in the air—but he "does his spiriting gently," studding the ground-snow thickly with diamonds, and shaping the tree-snow according to the peculiar and characteristic beauty of the leaves and sprays, on which it has alighted almost as gently as the dews of spring. You know every kind of tree still by its own spirit showing itself through that fairy veil—momentarily disguised from recognition—but admired the more in the sweet surprise with which again your heart salutes its familiar branches, all fancifully ornamented with their snow foliage, that murmurs not like the green leaves of summer, that like the yellow leaves of autumn strews not the earth with de-

cay, but often melts away into changes so invisible and inaudible that you wonder to find that it is all vanished, and to see the old tree again standing in its own faint-green glossy bark, with its many million buds, which perhaps fancy suddenly expands into a power of umbrage impenetrable to the sun in Scorpio.

A sudden burst of sunshine! bringing back the pensive spirit from the past to the present, and kindling it, till it dances like light reflected from a burning mirror. A cheerful Sun-scene, though almost destitute of life. An undulating Landscape, hillocky and hilly, but not mountainous, and buried under the weight of a day and night's incessant and continuous snow-fall. The weather has not been windy—and now that the flakes have ceased falling, there is not a cloud to be seen, except some delicate braidings here and there along the calm of the Great Blue Sea of Heaven. Most luminous is the sun, yet you can look straight on his face, almost with unwinking eyes, so mild and mellow is his large light as it overflows the day. All enclosures have disappeared, and you indistinctly ken the greater landmarks, such as a grove, a wood, a hall, a castle, a spire, a village, a town—the faint haze of a far off and smokeless city. Most intense is the silence; for all the streams are dumb, and the great river lies like a dead serpent in the strath. Not dead—for, lo! yonder one of his folds glitters—and in the glitter you see him moving—while all the rest of his sullen length is palsied by frost, and looks livid and more livid at every distant and more distant winding. What blackens on that tower of snow? Crows roosting innumerable on a huge tree—but they caw not in their hunger. Neither sheep nor cattle are to be seen or heard—but they are cared for;—the folds and the farm-yards are all full of life—and the ungathered stragglers are safe in their instincts. There has been a deep fall—but no storm—and the silence, though partly that of suffering, is not that of death. Therefore, to the imagination, unsaddened by the heart, the repose is beautiful. The almost unbroken uniformity of the scene—its simple and grand monotony—lulls all the thoughts and feelings into a calm, over which is breathed the gentle excitation of a novel charm, inspiring many fancies, all of a quiet character. Their range, perhaps, is not very extensive, but they all regard the homefelt and domestic charities of life. And the heart burns as here

and there some human dwelling discovers itself by a wreath of smoke up the air, or as the robin redbreast, a creature that is ever at hand, comes flitting before your path with an almost pert flutter of his feathers, bold from the acquaintanceship he has formed with you in severer weather at the threshold or window of the tenement, which for years may have been the winter sanctuary of the "bird whom man loves best," and who bears a Christian name in every clime he inhabits. Meanwhile the sun waxes brighter and warmer in heaven—some insects are in the air, as if that moment called to life—and the mosses that may yet be visible here and there along the ridge of a wall or on the stem of a tree, in variegated lustre frost-brightened, seem to delight in the snow, and in no other season of the year to be so happy as in winter. Such gentle touches of pleasure animate one's whole being, and connect, by many a fine association, the emotions inspired by the objects of animate and of inanimate nature.

Ponder on the idea—the emotion of purity—and how finely soul-blent is the delight imagination feels in a bright hush of new-fallen snow! Some speck or stain—however slight—there always seems to be on the most perfect whiteness of any other substance—or "dim suffusion veils" it with some faint discolour—witness even the leaf of the lily or the rose. Heaven forbid that we should ever breathe aught but love and delight in the beauty of these consummate flowers! But feels not the heart, even when the midsummer morning sunshine is melting the dew on their fragrant bosoms, that their loveliness is "of the earth earthy"—faintly tinged or streaked, when at the very fairest, with a hue foreboding languishment and decay? Not the less for its sake are those soulless flowers dear to us—thus owning kindred with them whose beauty is all soul enshrined for a short while on that perishable face. Do we not still regard the insensate flowers—so emblematical of what, in human life, we do most passionately love and profoundly pity—with a pensive emotion, often deepening into melancholy that sometimes, ere the strong fit subsides, blackens into despair! What pain doubtless was in the heart of the Elegiac Poet of old, when he sighed over the transitory beauty of flowers—

"Conquerimur natura brevis quam gratia Florum!"

But over a perfectly pure expanse of night-fallen snow, when unaffected by the gentle sun, the first fine frost has incrustated it with small sparkling diamonds, the prevalent emotion is Joy. There is a charm in the sudden and total disappearance even of the grassy green. All the "old familiar faces" of nature are for a while out of sight, and out of mind. That white silence shed by heaven over earth carries with it, far and wide, the pure peace of another region—almost another life. No image is there to tell of this restless and noisy world. The cheerfulness of reality kindles up our reverie ere it becomes a dream; and we are glad to feel our whole being complexioned by the passionless repose. If we think at all of human life, it is only of the young, the fair, and

the innocent. "Pure as snow," are words then felt to be most holy, as the image of some beautiful and beloved being comes and goes before our eyes—brought from a far distance in this our living world, or from a distance further still in a world beyond the grave—the image of a virgin growing up sinlessly to womanhood among her parents' prayers, or of some spiritual creature who expired long ago, and carried with her her native innocence unstained to heaven.

Such Spiritual Creature—too spiritual long to sojourn below the skies—wert Thou—whose rising and whose setting—both most starlike—brightened at once all thy native vale, and at once left it in darkness. Thy name has long slept in our heart—and there let it sleep unbreathed—even as, when we are dreaming our way through some solitary place, without naming it, we bless the beauty of some sweet wild-flower, pensively smiling to us through the snow.

The Sabbath returns on which, in the little kirk among the hills, we saw thee baptized. Then comes a wavering glimmer of five sweet years, that to Thee, in all their varieties, were but as one delightful season, one blessed life—and, finally, that other Sabbath, on which, at thy own dying request—between services thou wert buried.

How mysterious are all thy ways and workings, O gracious Nature! Thou who art but a name given by us to the Being in whom all things are and have life. Ere three years old, she, whose image is now with us, all over the small silvan world that beheld the evanescent revelation of her pure existence, was called the "Holy Child!" The taint of sin—inherited from those who disobeyed in Paradise—seemed from her fair clay to have been washed out at the baptismal font, and by her first infantine tears. So pious people almost believed, looking on her so unlike all other children, in the serenity of that habitual smile that clothed the creature's countenance with a wondrous beauty at an age when on other infants is but faintly seen the dawn of reason, and their eyes look happy just like the thoughtless flowers. So unlike all other children—but unlike only because sooner than they she seemed to have had given to her, even in the communion of the cradle, an intimation of the being and the providence of God. Sooner, surely, than through any other clay that ever enshrouded immortal spirit, dawned the light of religion on the face of the "Holy Child."

Her lisping language was sprinkled with words alien from common childhood's uncertain speech, that murmurs only when indigent nature prompts; and her own parents wondered whence they came, when first they looked upon her kneeling in an unbidden prayer. As one mild week of vernal sunshine covers the braes with primroses, so shone with fair and fragrant feeling—unfolded, ere they knew, before her parents' eyes—the divine nature of her who for a season was lent to them from the skies. She learned to read out of the Bible—almost without any teaching—they knew not how—just by looking gladly on the words, even as she looked on the pretty

daisies on the green—till their meanings stole insensibly into her soul, and the sweet syllables, succeeding each other on the blessed page, were all united by the memories her heart had been treasuring every hour that her father or her mother had read aloud in her hearing from the Book of Life. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"—how wept her parents, as these the most affecting of our Saviour's words dropt silver-sweet from her lips, and continued in her upward eyes among the swimming tears!

Be not incredulous of this dawn of reason, wonderful as it may seem to you, so soon becoming morn—almost perfect daylight—with the "Holy Child." Many such miracles are set before us—but we recognise them not, or pass them by with a word or a smile of short surprise. How leaps the baby in its mother's arms, when the mysterious charm of music thrills through its little brain! And how learns it to modulate its feeble voice, unable yet to articulate, to the melodies that bring forth all round its eyes a delighted smile! Who knows what then may be the thoughts and feelings of the infant awakened to the sense of a new world, alive through all its being to sounds that haply glide past our ears unmeaning as the breath of the common air! Thus have mere infants sometimes been seen inspired by music till, like small genii, they warbled spell-strains of their own, powerful to sadden and subdue our hearts. So, too, have infant eyes been so charmed by the rainbow irradiating the earth, that almost infant hands have been taught, as if by inspiration, the power to paint in finest colours, and to imitate, with a wondrous art, the skies so beautiful to the quick-awakened spirit of delight. What knowledge have not some children acquired, and gone down scholars to their small untimely graves! Knowing that such things have been—are—and will be—why art thou incredulous of the divine expansion of soul, so soon understanding the things that are divine—in the "Holy Child?"

Thus grew she in the eye of God, day by day waxing wiser and wiser in the knowledge that tends towards the skies; and, as if some angel visitant were nightly with her in her dreams, awakening every morn with a new dream of thought, that brought with it a gift of more comprehensive speech. Yet merry she was at times with her companions among the woods and braes, though while they all were laughing, she only smiled; and the passing traveller, who might pause for a moment to bless the sweet creatures in their play, could not but single out one face among the many fair, so pensive in its paleness, a face to be remembered, coming from afar, like a mournful thought upon the hour of joy.

Sister or brother of her own had she none—and often both her parents—who lived in a hut by itself up among the mossy stumps of the old decayed forest—had to leave her alone—sometimes even all the day long from morning till night. But she no more wearied in her solitariness than does the wren in the wood. All the flowers were her friends—all the birds,

The linnet ceased not his song for her, though her footsteps wandered into the green glade among the yellow broom, almost within reach of the spray from which he poured his melody—the quiet eyes of his mate feared her not when her garments almost touched the bush where she brooded on her young. Shyest of the winged silvans, the cushat clapped not her wings away on the soft approach of such harmless footsteps to the pine that concealed her slender nest. As if blown from heaven, descended round her path the showers of the painted butterflies, to feed, sleep, or die—undisturbed by her—upon the wild-flowers—with wings, when motionless, undistinguishable from the blossoms. And well she loved the brown, busy, blameless bees, come thither for the honey-dews from a hundred cots sprinkled all over the parish, and all high overhead sailing away at evening, laden and wearied, to their straw-roofed skeps in many a hamlet garden. The leaf of every tree, shrub, and plant, she knew familiarly and lovingly in its own characteristic beauty; and she was loath to shake one dew-drop from the sweetbrier-rose. And well she knew that all nature loved her in return—that they were dear to each other in their innocence—and that the very sunshine, in motion or in rest, was ready to come at the bidding of her smiles. Skilful those small white hands of hers among the reeds and rushes and osiers—and many a pretty flower-basket grew beneath their touch, her parents wondering on their return home to see the handiwork of one who was never idle in her happiness. Thus early—ere yet but five years old—did she earn her mite for the sustenance of her own beautiful life. The russet garb she wore she herself had won—and thus Poverty, at the door of that hut, became even like a Guardian Angel, with the lineaments of heaven on her brow, and the quietude of heaven beneath her feet.

But these were but her lonely pastimes, or gentle taskwork self-imposed among her pastimes, and itself the sweetest of them all, inspired by a sense of duty that still brings with it its own delight, and hallowed by religion, that even in the most adverse lot changes slavery into freedom—till the heart, insensible to the bonds of necessity, sings aloud for joy. The life within the life of the "Holy Child," apart from even such innocent employments as these, and from such recreations as innocent, among the shadows and the sunshine of those silvan haunts, was passed—let us fear not to say the truth, wondrous as such worship was in one so very young—was passed in the worship of God; and her parents—though sometimes even saddened to see such piety in a small creature like her, and afraid, in their exceeding love, that it betokened an early removal from this world of one too perfectly pure ever to be touched by its sins and sorrows—forebore, in an awful pity, ever to remove the Bible from her knees, as she would sit with it there, not at morning and at evening only, or all the Sabbath long as soon as they returned from the kirk, but often through all the hours of the longest and sunniest week-days, when, had she chosen to do so, there was nothing to

hinder her from going up the hill-side, or down to the little village, to play with the other children, always too happy when she appeared—nothing to hinder her but the voice she heard speaking in that Book, and the hallelujahs that, at the turning over of each blessed page, came upon the ear of the “Holy Child” from white-robed saints all kneeling before His throne in heaven.

Her life seemed to be the same in sleep. Often at midnight, by the light of the moon shining in upon her little bed beside theirs, her parents leant over her face, diviner in dreams, and wept as she wept, her lips all the while murmuring, in broken sentences of prayer, the name of Him who died for us all. But plenteous as were her penitential tears—penitential in the holy humbleness of her stainless spirit, over thoughts that had never left a dimming breath on its purity, yet that seemed in those strange visitings to be haunting her as the shadows of sins—soon were they all dried up in the lustre of her returning smiles. Waking, her voice in the kirk was the sweetest among many sweet, as all the young singers, and she the youngest far, sat together by themselves, and within the congregational music of the psalm uplifted a silvery strain that sounded like the very spirit of the whole, even like angelic harmony blent with a mortal song. But sleeping, still more sweetly sang the “Holy Child;” and then, too, in some diviner inspiration than ever was granted to it while awake, her soul composed its own hymns, and set the simple scriptural words to its own mysterious music—the tunes she loved best gliding into one another, without once ever marring the melody, with pathetic touches interposed never heard before, and never more to be renewed! For each dream had its own breathing, and many-visioned did then seem to be the sinless creature’s sleep.

The love that was borne for her all over the hill-region, and beyond its circling clouds, was almost such as mortal creatures might be thought to feel for some existence that had visibly come from heaven. Yet all who looked on her, saw that she, like themselves, was mortal, and many an eye was wet, the heart wist not why, to hear such wisdom falling from such lips; for dimly did it prognosticate, that as short as bright would be her walk from the cradle to the grave. And thus for the “Holy Child” was their love elevated by awe, and saddened by pity—and as by herself she passed pensively by their dwellings, the same eyes that smiled on her presence, on her disappearance wept.

Not in vain for others—and for herself, oh! what great gain!—for those few years on earth did that pure spirit ponder on the word of God! Other children became pious from their delight in her piety—for she was simple as the simplest among them all, and walked with them hand in hand, nor declined companionship with any one that was good. But all grew good by being with her—and parents had but to whisper her name, and in a moment the passionate sob was hushed—the lowering brow lighted—and the household in peace. Older hearts owned the power of the

piety so far surpassing their thoughts; and time-hardened sinners, it is said, when looking and listening to the “Holy Child,” knew the error of their ways, and returned to the right path as at a voice from heaven.

Bright was her seventh summer—the brightest, so the aged said, that had ever, in man’s memory, shone over Scotland. One long, still, sunny, blue day followed another, and in the rainless weather, though the dews kept green the hills, the song of the streams was low. But paler and paler, in sunlight and moonlight, became the sweet face that had been always pale; and the voice that had been always something mournful, breathed lower and sadder still from the too perfect whiteness of her breast. No need—no fear—to tell her that she was about to die. Sweet whispers had sung it to her in her sleep—and waking she knew it in the look of the piteous skies. But she spoke not to her parents of death more than she had often done—and never of her own. Only she seemed to love them with a more exceeding love—and was readier, even sometimes when no one was speaking, with a few drops of tears. Sometimes she disappeared—nor, when sought for, was found in the woods about the hut. And one day that mystery was cleared; for a shepherd saw her sitting by herself on a grassy mound in a nook of the small solitary kirkyard, a long mile off among the hills, so lost in reading the Bible, that shadow or sound of his feet awoke her not; and, ignorant of his presence, she knelt down and prayed—for a while weeping bitterly—but soon comforted by a heavenly calm—that her sins might be forgiven her!

One Sabbath evening, soon after, as she was sitting beside her parents at the door of their hut, looking first for a long while on their faces, and then for a long while on the sky, though it was not yet the stated hour of worship, she suddenly knelt down, and leaning on their knees, with hands clasped more fervently than her wont, she broke forth into tremulous singing of that hymn which from her lips they never heard without unendurable tears:

“The hour of my departure’s come,
I hear the voice that calls me home;
At last, O Lord, let trouble cease,
And let thy servant die in peace!”

They carried her fainting to her little bed, and uttered not a word to one another till she revived. The shock was sudden, but not unexpected, and they knew now that the hand of death was upon her, although her eyes soon became brighter and brighter, they thought, than they had ever been before. But forehead, cheeks, lips, neck, and breast, were all as white, and, to the quivering hands that touched them, almost as cold, as snow. Ineffable was the bliss in those radiant eyes; but the breath of words was frozen, and that hymn was almost her last farewell. Some few words she spake—and named the hour and day she wished to be buried. Her lips could then just faintly return the kiss, and no more—a film came over the now dim blue of her eyes—the father listened for her breath—and then the mother took his place, and leaned her ear to the unbreathing mouth, long deluding her

self with its lifelike smile; but a sudden darkness in the room, and a sudden stillness, most dreadful both, convinced their unbelieving hearts at last, that it was death.

All the parish, it may be said, attended her funeral—for none stayed away from the kirk that Sabbath—though many a voice was unable to join in the Psalm. The little grave was soon filled up—and you hardly knew that the turf had been disturbed beneath which she lay. The afternoon service consisted but of a prayer—for he who ministered, had loved her with love unspeakable—and, though an old gray-haired man, all the time he prayed he wept. In the sobbing kirk her parents were sitting, but no one looked at them—and when the congregation rose to go, there they remained sitting—and an hour afterwards, came out again into the open air, and parting with their pastor at the gate, walked away to their hut, overshadowed with the blessing of a thousand prayers.

And did her parents, soon after she was buried, die of broken hearts, or pine away disconsolately to their graves? Think not that they, who were Christians indeed, could be

guilty of such ingratitude. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away—blessed be the name of the Lord!" were the first words they had spoke by that bedside; during many, many long years of weal or wo, duly every morning and night, these same blessed words did they utter when on their knees together in prayer—and many a thousand times besides, when they were apart, she in her silent hut, and he on the hill—neither of them unhappy in their solitude, though never again, perhaps, was his countenance so cheerful as of yore—and though often suddenly amidst mirth or sunshine their eyes were seen to overflow. Happy had they been—as we mortal beings ever can be happy—during many pleasant years of wedded life before she had been born. And happy were they—on to the verge of old age—long after she had here ceased to be. Their Bible had indeed been an idle book—the Bible that belonged to "the Holy Child,"—and idle all their kirk-goings with "the Holy Child," through the Sabbath-calm—had those intermediate years not left a power of bliss behind them triumphant over death and the grave.

OUR PARISH.

NATURE must be bleak and barren indeed to possess no power over the young spirit daily expanding on her breast into new susceptibilities, that erelong are felt to fill life to overflowing with a perpetual succession—an infinite series—of enjoyments. Nowhere is she destitute of that power—not on naked seashores—not in central deserts. But our boyhood was envired by the beautiful—its home was among moors and mountains, which people in towns and cities called dreary, but which we knew to be the cheerfulest and most gladsome parish in all braid Scotland—and well it might be, for it was in her very heart. Mountains they seemed to us in those days, though now we believe they are only hills. But such hills!—undulating far and wide away till the highest even on clear days seemed to touch the sky, and in cloudy weather were verily a part of heaven. Many a valley, and many a glen—and many a hollow that was neither valley nor glen—and many a flat, of but a few green acres, which we thought plains—and many a cleft waterless with its birks and brechans, except when the rains came down, and then they all sang a new song in merry chorus—and many a wood, and many a grove, for it takes no great number of trees to make a wood, and four firs by themselves in a lone-some place are a grove—and many a single sycamore, and many a single ash, kenned afar-off above its protected cottage—and many an indescribable spot of scenery, at once pastoral and agricultural and silvan, where if house there was, you hardly knew it among the rocks;—so was Our Parish, which people in

towns and cities called dreary, composed; but the composition itself—as well might we hope thus to show it to your soul's eye, as by a few extracts however fine, and a few criticisms however exquisite, to give you the idea of a perfect poem.

But we have not given you more than a single hint of a great part of our Parish—the Moor. It was then ever so many miles long, and ever so many miles broad, and nobody thought of guessing how many miles round—but some twenty years ago it was absolutely measured to a rood by a land-louper of a land-surveyor—distributed—drained—enclosed—utterly ruined for ever. No, not for ever. Nature laughs to scorn acts of Parliament, and we predict that in a quarter of a century she will resume her management of that moor. We rejoice to hear that she is beginning already to take lots of it into her own hands. Wheat has no business there, and should keep to the carses. In spring she takes him by the braid till he looks yellow in the face long before his time—in summer, by the cuff of the neck till he lies down on his back and rots in the rain—in autumn, by the ears, and rubs him against the grain till he expires as fushionless as the winnlestraes with which he is interlaced—in winter, she shakes him in the stook till he is left but a shadow which pigeons despise. See him in stack at Christmas, and you pity the poor straw. Here and there bits of bear or big, and barley, she permits to flourish—nor is she loth to see the flowers and shaws and apples on the poor man's plant, the life-sustaining potato—which none but political economists hate and

all Christians love. She is not so sure about turnips, but as they are a green crop she leaves them to the care of the fly. But where have her gowans gone? There they still are in flocks, which no cultivation can scatter or eradicate—inextinguishable by all the lime that was ever brought unslokened from all the kilns that ever glowed—by all the dung that was ever heaped up fresh and fuming from all the Augean stables in the land. Yet her heart burns within her to behold, even in the midst of what she abhors, the large dew-loved heads of clover whitening or reddening, or with their rival colours amicably intermingled, a new birth glorious in the place of reedy marsh or fen where the catspaws nodded—and them she will retain unto herself when once more she shall rejoice in her Wilderness Restored.

And would we be so barbarous as to seek to impede the progress of improvement, and to render agriculture a dead letter? We are not so barbarous nor yet so savage. We love civilized life, of which we have long been one of the smaller but sincerest ornaments. But agriculture, like education, has its bounds. It is, like it, a science, and wo to the country that encourages all kinds of quacks. Cultivate a moor! educate a boor! First understand the character of Clods and Clodhoppers. To say nothing of the Urbans and Suburbans—a perilous people—yet of great capabilities; for to discuss that question would lead us into lanes; and as it is a long lane that has never a turning, for the present we keep in the open air, and abstain from wynds. We are no enemies to poor soils, far less to rich ones ignorantly and stupidly called poor, which under proper treatment effuse riches; but to expect to extract from paupers a return for the expenditure squandered by miserly greed on their reluctant bottoms, cold and bare, is the insanity of speculation, and such schemers deserve being buried along with their capital in quagmires. Heavens! how they—the quagmires—suck in the dung! You say they don't suck it in—well, then, they spew it out—it evaporates—and what is the worth of weeds? Lime whitens a moss, that is true; but so does snow. Snow melts—what becomes of lime no mortal knows but the powheads—they it poisons, and they give up the ghost. Drains are dug deep now-a-days—and we respect Mr. Johnstone. So are gold mines. But from gold mines that precious metal—at a great expense, witness its price—is extorted; in drains, that precious metal, witness wages, is interred, and then it becomes *squash*. Stirks starve—heifers are hove with windy nothing—with oxen frogs compete in bulk with every prospect of a successful issue, and on such pasturage where would be the virility of the Bulls of Bashan?

If we be in error, we shall be forgiven at least by all lovers of the past, and what to the elderly seems the olden time. Oh, misery for that Moor! Hundreds, thousands, loved it as well as we did; for though it grew no grain, many a glorious crop it bore—shadows that glided like ghosts—the giants stalked—the dwarfs crept;—yet sometimes were the dwarfs more formidable than the giants, lying like

blackamoors before your very feet, and as you stumbled over them in the dark, throttling as as if they sought to strangle you, and then leaving you at your leisure to wipe from your mouth the mire by the light of a straggling star;—sunbeams that wrestled with the shadows in the gloom—sometimes clean flung, and then they cowered into the heather, and insinuated themselves into the earth; sometimes victorious, and then how they capered in the lift, ere they shivered away—not always without a hymn of thunder—in behind the clouds, to refresh themselves in their tabernacle in the sky.

Won't you be done with this Moor, you monomaniac? Not for yet a little while—for we see Kitty North all by himself in the heart of it, a boy apparently about the age of twelve, and happy as the day is long, though it is the Longest Day in all the year. Aimless he seems to be, but all alive as a grasshopper, and is leaping like a two-year-old across the hags. Were he to tumble in, what would become of the personage whom Kean's Biographer would call "the future Christopher the First." But no fear of that—for at no period of his life did he ever overrate his powers—and he knows now his bound to an inch. Cap, bonnet, hat, he has none; and his yellow hair, dancing on his shoulders like a mane, gives him the look of a precocious lion's whelp. Leonine too is his aspect, yet mild withal; and but for a certain fierceness in his gambols, you would not suspect he was a young creature of prey. A fowling-piece is in his left hand, and in his right a rod. And what may he be purposing to shoot? Any thing full-fledged that may play whirr or sugh. Good grouse-ground this; but many are yet in the egg, and the rest are but cheepers—little bigger than the small brown moorland bird that goes burling up with its own short epithalamium, and drops down on the rushes still as a stone. Them he harms not on their short flight—but marking them down, twirls his piece like a fugleman, and thinks of the Twelfth. Safer methinks wilt thou be a score or two yards further off, O Whawp! for though thy young are yet callow, Kit is beginning to think they may shift for themselves; and that long bill and that long neck, and those long legs and that long body—the *tout-ensemble* so elegant, so graceful, and so wild—are a strong temptation to the trigger;—click—clack—whizz—phew—fire—smoke and thunder—head-over-heels topsy-turvy goes the poor curlew—and Kit stands over him leaning on his single-barrel, with a stern but somewhat sad aspect, exulting in his skill, yet sorry for the creature whose wild cry will be heard no more.

'Tis an oasis in the desert. That green spot is called a quagmire—an ugly name enough—but itself is beautiful; for it diffuses its own light round about it, like a star vivifying its halo. The sward encircling it is firm—and Kit lays him down, heedless of the bird, with eyes fixed on the oozing spring. How fresh the wild cresses! His very eyes are drinking! His thirst is at once excited and satisfied by looking at the lustrous leaves—composed of cooling light without spot or stain. What

ails the boy? He covers his face with his hands, and in his silence sighs. A small white hand, with its fingers spread, rises out of the spring, as if it were beckoning to heaven in prayer—and then is sucked slowly in again out of sight with a gurgling groan. The spring so fresh and fair—so beautiful with its cresses and many another water-loving plant beside—is changed into the same horrid quagmire it was that day—a holyday—three years ago—when racing in her joy Amy Lewars blindly ran into it, among her blithe companions, and suddenly perished. Childhood, they say, soon dries its tears, and soon forgets. God be praised for all his goodness! true it is that on the cheek of childhood tears are dried up as if by the sunshine of joy stealing from on high—but, God be praised for all his goodness! false it is that the heart of childhood has not a long memory, for in a moment the mournful past revives within it—as often as the joyful—sadness becomes sorrow, sorrow grief, and grief anguish, as now it is with the solitary boy seated by that ghastly spot in the middle of the wide moor.

Away he flies, and he is humming a tune. But what's this? A merry-making in the moor? Ay, merry-making; but were you to take part in it, you would find it about the hardest work that ever tried the strength of your spine. 'Tis a party of divotflaughters. The people in the parish are now digging their peats, and here is a whole household, provident of winter, borrowing fuel from the moss. They are far from coals, and wood is intended by nature for other uses; but fire in peat she dedicated to the hearth, and there it burns all over Scotland, Highland and Lowland, far and near, at many a holy altar. 'Tis the mid-day hour of rest. Some are half-asleep, some yet eating, some making a sort of under-voiced, under-hand love. "Mr. North! Mr. North! Mr. North!" is the joyful cry—horny-fists first—downy-fists next—and after heartiest greeting, Master Kitty is installed, enthroned on a knowe, Master of the Ceremonies—and in good time gives them a song. Then "galliards cry a hall, a hall," and hark and lo! preluded by six smacks—three foursome reels! "Sic hirdum-dirdum and sic din," on the sward, to a strathspey frae the fiddle o' auld blin' Hugh Lyndsay, the itinerant musician, who was noways particular about the number of his strings, and when one, or even two snapped, used to play away at pretty much of the same tune with redoubled energy and variations. He had the true old Niel-Gow yell, and had he played on for ever, folk would have danced on for ever till they had all, one after the other, dropped down dead. What steps!

"Who will try me," cries Kit, "at loup-the-barrows?" "I will," quoth Souple Tam. The barrows are laid—how many side by side we fear to say—for we have become sensitive on our veracity—on a beautiful piece of springy-turf, an inclined plane with length sufficient for a run; and while old and young line both sides of the lane near the loup, stript to the sark and the breeks, Souple Tam, as he fondly thinks, shows the way to win, and clears them all like a frog or a roebuck. "Clear the way,

clear the way for the callant, Kit's coming!" cries Ebenezer Brackenrigg, the Elder, a douce man now, but a deevil in his youth, and like "a waff o' lichtnin'" past their een, Kit clears the barrows a foot beyond Souple Tam, and at the first fly is declared victor by acclamation. Oh, our unprophetic soul! did the day indeed dawn—many long years after this our earliest great conquest yet traditional in the parish—that ere nightfall witnessed our defeat by—a tailor! The Flying Tailor of Etterick—the Lying Shepherd thereof—would they had never been born—the one to triumph and the other to record that triumph;—yet let us be just to the powers of our rival—for though all the world knows we were lame when we leapt him, long past our prime, had been wading all day in the Yarrow with some stones-weight in our creel, and allowed him a yard,

"Great must I call him, for he vanquish'd me."

What a place at night was that Moor! At night! That is a most indeterminate mode of expression, for there are nights of all sorts and sizes, and what kind of a night do we mean? Not a mirk night, for no man ever walked that moor on a mirk night, except one, and he, though blind-fou, was drowned. But a night may be dark without being mirk, with or without stars; and on many such a night have we, but not always alone—who was with us you shall never know—threaded our way with no other clue than that of evolving recollections, originally notices, across that wilderness of labyrinths, fearlessly, yet at times with a beating heart. Our companion had her clue too, one in her pocket, of blue worsted, with which she kept in repair all the stockings belonging to the family, and one in her memory, of green ethereal silk, which, finer far than any spider's web, she let out as she tript along the moor, and on her homeward-way she felt, by some spiritual touch, the invisible lines, along which she retript as safely as if they had been moonbeams. During such journeyings we never saw the moor, how then can you expect us to describe it?

But oftener we were alone. Earthquakes abroad are dreadful occurrences, and blot out the obituary. But here they are so gentle that the heedless multitude never feel them, and on hearing you tell of them, they incredulously stare. That moor made no show of religion, but was a Quaker. We had but to stand still for five minutes or so, no easy matter then, for we were more restless than a wave, or to lie down with our ear to the ground, and the spirit was sure to move the old Quaker, who forthwith began to preach and pray and sing Psalms. How he moaned at times as if his heart were breaking! At times, as if some old forgotten sorrow were recalled, how he sighed! Then recovering his self-possession, as if to clear his voice, he gave a hem, and then a short nasty cough like a patient in a consumption. Now all was hush, and you might have supposed he had fallen asleep, for in that hush you heard what seemed an intermitting snore. When all at once, whew, whew, whew, as if he were whistling, accompanied with a strange rushing sound as of diving wings. That was in the air—but instantly

after you heard something odder still in the bog. And while wondering, and of your wonder finding no end, the ground, which a moment before had felt firm as a road, began to shrink, and sink, and hesitate, and hurry, and crumble, and mumble all around you, and close up to your very feet—the quagmires gurgling as if choked—and a subterranean voice distinctly articulating Oh! Oh! Oh!

We have heard of people who pretend not to believe in ghosts—geologists who know how the world was created; but will they explain that moor? And how happened it that only by nights and dark nights it was so haunted? Beneath a wakeful moon and unwinking stars it was silent as a frozen sea. You listened then, and heard but the grass growing, and beautiful grass it was, though it was called coarse, and made the sweetest-scented hay. What crowds of bum-bees' bykes—foggies—did the scythe not reveal as it heaped up the heavy swathes—three hundred stone to the acre—by guess—for there was neither weighing nor measuring there then-a-days, but all was in the lump—and there the rush-roped stacks stood all the winter through, that they might be near the "eerie outlan cattle," on places where cart-wheel never circled, nor axle-tree creaked—nor ever car of antique make trailed its low load along—for the horse would have been laired. We knew not then at all—and now we but imperfectly know—the cause of the Beautiful. Then we believed the Beautiful to be wholly extern; something we had nothing to do with but to look at, and lo! it shone divinely there! Happy creed if false—for in it, with holiest reverence, we blamelessly adored the stars. There they were in millions as we thought—every one brighter than another, when by chance we happened to fix on any individual among them, that we might look through its face into its heart. All above gloriously glittering, all below a blank. Our body here, our spirit, there—how mean our birth-place, our death-home how magnificent! "Fear God and keep his commandments," said a small still voice—and we felt that if He gave us strength to obey that law, we should live for ever beyond all those stars.

But were there no Lochs in our parish? Yea—Four. The Little Loch—the White Loch—the Black Loch—and the Brother Loch. Not a tree on the banks of any one of them—yet he had been a blockhead who called them bare. Had there been any need for trees, Nature would have sown them on hills she so dearly loved. Nor sheep nor cattle were ever heard to complain of those pastures. They bleated and they lowed as cheerily as the moorland birdies sang—and how cheerily that was nobody knew who had not often met the morning on the brae, and shaken hands with her the rosy-fingered like two familiar friends. No want of loun places there, in which the creatures could lie with wool or hair unruffled among surrounding storms. For the hills had been dropt from the hollow of His hand who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb"—and even high up, where you might see tempest-stricken stones—one of them like pillars—but placed not there by human art—there were

cozy bields in wildest weather, and some into which the snow was never known to drift, green all the winter through—perennial nests. Such was the nature of the region where lay our Four Lochs. They were some quarter of a mile—some half mile—and some whole mile—not more—asunder; but there was no great height—and we have a hundred times climbed the highest—from which they could be all seen at once—so cannily were they embosomed, so needed not to be embowered.

The LITTLE LOCH was the rushiest and reediest little rascal that ever rustled, and he was on the very edge of the Moor. That he had fish we all persisted in believing, in spite of all the successful angling of all kinds that from time immemorial had assailed his sullen depths—but what a place for powheads! One continued bank of them—while yet they were but eyes in the spawn—encircled it instead of water lilies; and at "the season of the year," by throwing in a few stones you awoke a croaking that would have silenced a rookery. In the early part of the century a pike had been seen basking in the shallows, by eye-measurement about ten feet long—but fortunately he had never been hooked, or the consequences would have been fatal. We have seen the Little Loch alive with wild-ducks; but it was almost impossible by position to get a shot at them—and quite impossible, if you did, to get hold of the slain. Fro himself—the best dog that ever dived—was baffled by the multiplicity of impediments and obstructions—and at last refused to take the water—sat down and howled in spiteful rage. Yet Imagination loved the Little Loch, and so did Hope. We have conquered it in sleep both with rod and gun—the weight of bag and basket has wakened us out of dreams of murder that never were realized—yet once, and once only, in it we caught an eel, which we skinned, and wore the shrivel for many a day round our ankle—nor is it a vain superstition—to preserve it from sprains. We are willing the Little Loch should be drained; but you would have to dig a fearsome trench, for it used to have no bottom. A party of us—six—ascertained that fact, by heaving into it a stone which six-and-thirty schoolboys of this degenerate age could not have lifted from its moss-bed—and though we watched for an hour not a bubble rose to the surface. It used sometimes to boil like a pot on breathless days, for events happening in foreign countries disturbed the spring, and the torments it suffered thousands of fathoms below, were manifested above in turbulence that would have drowned a schoolboy's skiff.

The WHITE LOCH—so called from the silver sand of its shores—had likewise its rushy and reedy bogs; but access to every part of the main body was unimpeded, and you waded into it, gradually deeper and deeper, with such a delightful descent, that up to the arm-pits and then to the chin, you could keep touching the sand with your big-toe, till you floated away off at the nail, out of your depth, without for a little while discovering that it was incumbent on you, for sake of your personal safety, to take to regular swimming—and then how

buoyant was the milk-warm water, without a wave but of your own creating, as the ripples went circling away before your breast or your breath! It was absolutely too clear—for without knitting your brows you could not see it on bright airless days—and wondered what had become of it—when all at once, as if it had been that very moment created out of nothing, there it was! endued with some novel beauty—for of all the lochs we ever knew—and to be so simple too—the White Loch had surely the greatest variety of expression—but all within the cheerful—for sadness was alien altogether from its spirit, and the gentle Mere for ever wore a smile. Swans—but that was but once—our own eyes had seen on it—and were they wild or were they tame swans, certain it is they were great and glorious and lovely creatures, and whiter than any snow. No house was within sight, and they had nothing to fear—nor did they look afraid—sailing in the centre of the loch—nor did we see them fly away—for we lay still on the hillside till in the twilight we should not have known what they were, and we left them there among the shadows seemingly asleep. In the morning they were gone, and perhaps making love in some foreign land.

The BLACK LOCH was a strange misnomer for one so fair—for black we never saw him, except it might be for an hour or so before thunder. If he really was a loch of colour the original taint had been washed out of him, and he might have shown his face among the purest waters of Europe. But then he was deep; and knowing that, the natives had named him, in no unnatural confusion of ideas, the Black Loch. We have seen wild-duck eggs five fathoms down so distinctly that we could count them—and though that is not a bad dive, we have brought them up, one in our mouth and one in each hand, the tenants of course dead—nor can we now conjecture what sank them there; but ornithologists see unaccountable sights, and they only who are not ornithologists disbelieve Audubon and Wilson. Two features had the Black Loch which gave it to our eyes a pre-eminence in beauty over the other three—a tongue of land that half divided it, and never on hot days was without some cattle grouped on its very point, and in among the water—and a cliff on which, though it was not very lofty, a pair of falcons had their nest. Yet in misty weather, when its head was hidden, the shrill cry seemed to come from a great height. There were some ruins too—tradition said of some church or chapel—that had been ruins long before the establishment of the Protestant faith. But they were somewhat remote, and likewise somewhat imaginary, for stones are found lying strangely distributed, and those looked to our eyes not like such as builders use, but to have been dropped there most probably from the moon.

But the best beloved, if not the most beautiful, of them all was the BROTHER LOCH. It mattered not what was his disposition of genius, every one of us boys, however different might be our other tastes, preferred it far beyond the rest, and for once that we visited any of them we visited it twenty times, nor ever

once left it with disappointed hopes of enjoyment. It was the nearest, and therefore most within our power, so that we could gallop to it on shank's naiggie, well on in the afternoon, and enjoy what seemed a long day of delight, swift as flew the hours, before evening-prayers. Yet was it remote enough to make us always feel that our race thither was not for every day—and we seldom returned home without an adventure. It was the largest too by far of the Four—and indeed its area would have held the waters of all the rest. Then there was a charm to our heart as well as our imagination in its name—for tradition assigned it on account of three brothers that perished in its waters—and the same name for the same reason belongs to many another loch—and to one pool on almost every river. But above all it was the Loch for angling, and we long kept to perch. What schools! Not that they were of a very large size—though pretty well—but hundreds all nearly the same size gladdened our hearts as they lay, at the close of our sport, in separate heaps on the greensward-shore, more beautiful out of all sight than your silver or golden fishes in a glass-vase, where one appears to be twenty, and the delusive voracity is all for a single crumb. No bait so killing as cowshairn-mawks, fresh from their native bed, scooped out with the thumb. He must have been a dear friend to whom in a scarcity, by the water-side, when the corks were dipping, we would have given a mawk. No pike. Therefore the trout were allowed to gain their natural size—and that seemed to be about five pounds—adolescents not unfrequent swam two or three—and you seldom or never saw the smaller fry. But few were the days “good for the Brother Loch.” Perch rarely failed you, for by perseverance you were sure to fall in with one circumnatory school or other, and to do murderous work among them with the mawk, from the schoolmaster himself inclusive down to the little booby of the lowest form. Not so with Trout. We have angled ten hours a-day for half a-week, (during the vacance,) without ever getting a single rise, nor could even that be called bad sport, for we lived in momentary expectation, mingled with fear, of a monster. Better far from sunrise to sunset never to move a fin, than oh! me miserable! to hook a huge hero with shoulders like a hog—play him till he comes floating side up close to the shore, and then to feel the feckless fly leave his lip and begin gamboling in the air, while he wallops away back into his native element, and sinks utterly and for evermore into the dark profound. Life loses at such a moment all that makes life desirable—yet strange! the wretch lives on—and has not the heart to drown himself, as he wrings his hands and curses his lot and the day he was born. But, thank Heaven, that ghastly fit of fancy is gone by, and we imagine one of those dark, scowling, gusty, almost tempestuous days, “prime for the Brother Loch.” No glare or glitter on the water, no reflection of fleecy clouds, but a black-blue undulating swell, at times turbulent—with now and then a breaking wave—that was the weather in which the giants fed, showing their backs like

dolphins within a fathom of the shore, and sucking in the red heckle among your very feet. Not an insect in the air, yet then the fly was all the rage. This is a mystery, for you could do nothing with the worm. Oh! that we had then known the science of the spinning minnow! But we were then but an apprentice—who are now Emeritus Grand Master. Yet at this distance of time—half a century and more—it is impious to repine. Gut was not always to be got; and on such days a three-haired snood did the business—for they were bold as lions, and rashly rushed on death. The gleam of the yellow-worsted body with star-y-pointed tail maddened them with desire—no dallying with the gay-deceiver—they licked him in—they gorged him—and while satiating their passion got involved in inextricable fate. You have seen a single strong horse ploughing up hill. How he sets his briskeet to it—and snuvs along—as the furrows fall in beautiful regularity from the gliding share. So snuved along the Monarch of the Mere—or the heir-apparent—or heir-presumptive—or some other branch of the royal family—while our line kept steadily cutting the waves, and our rod enclosing some new segment of the sky.

But many another pastime we pursued upon those pastoral hills, for even angling has its due measure, and unless that be preserved, the passion wastes itself into lassitude, or waxes into disease. "I would not angle alway," thinks the wise boy—"off to some other game we altogether flew." Never were there such hills for hare and hounds. There couched many a pussey—and there Bob Howie's famous Tickler—the Grew of all Grews—first stained his flues in the blood of the Fur. But there is no coursing between April and October—and during the intervening months we used to have many a hunt on foot, without dogs, after the leverets. We all belonged to the High School indeed, and here was its playground. Cricket we had then never heard of; but there was ample room and verge enough for football. Our prime delight, however, was the chase. We were all in perpetual training, and in such wind that there were no bellows to mend after a flight of miles. We circled the Lochs. Plashing through the marishes we strained winding up the hillsides, till on the cairn called a beacon that crowned the loftiest summit of the range, we stood and waved defiance to our pursuers scattered wide and far below, for 'twas a Deer hunt. Then we became cavaliers. We caught the long-maned and long-tailed colts, and mounting bare-backed, with rush helmets and segg sabres charged the nowt till the stirks were scattered, and the lowing lord of herds himself taken captive, as he stood pawing in a nook with his nose to the ground and eyes of fire. That was the riding-school in which we learned to witch the world with noble horsemanship. We thus got confirmed in that fine, easy, unconstrained, natural seat, which we carried with us into the saddle when we were required to handle the bridle instead of the mane. 'Tis right to hold on by the knees, but equally so to hold on by the

calves of the legs and the heels. The modern system of turning out the toes, and sticking out the legs as if they were cork or timber, is at once dangerous and ridiculous; hence in our cavalry the men got unhorsed in every charge. On pony-back we used to make the soles of our feet smack together below the belly, for quadruped and biped were both unhorsed, and hoof needed no iron on that stoneless sward. But the biggest fun of all was to "grup the auld mare," and ride her sextuple, the tallest boy sitting on the neck, and the shortest on the rump with his face to the tail, and holding on by that fundamental feature by which the urchin toolled her along as by a tiller. How the silly foal whinnied, as with light-gathered steps he accompanied in circles his populous parent, and seemed almost to doubt her identity, till one by one we slipped off over her hurdies, and let him take a suck! But what comet is yon in the sky—"with fear of change perplexing mallards?" A Flying Dragon. Of many degrees is his tail, with a tuft like that of Taurus terrified by the sudden entrance of the Sun into his sign. Up goes Sandy Donald's rusty and rimless beaver as a messenger to the Celestial. He obeys, and stooping his head, descends with many diverse divings, and buries his beak in the earth. The feathered kite quails and is cowed by him of paper, and there is a scampering of cattle on a hundred hills.

The Brother Loch saw annually another sight, when on the Green-Brae was pitched a Tent—a snow-white Pyramid, gathering to itself all the sunshine. There lords and ladies, and knights and squires, celebrated Old May-day, and half the parish flocked to the Festival. The Earl of Eglintoun, and Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, and old Sir John of Polloc, and Pollock of that Ilk, and other heads of illustrious houses, with their wives and daughters, a beautiful show, did not disdain them of low degree, but kept open table in the moor; and would you believe it, high-born youths and maidens ministered at the board to cottage lads and lasses, whose sunburnt faces hardly dared to smile, under awe of that courtsey—yet whenever they looked up there was happiness in their eyes. The young ladies were all arrayed in green; and after the feast, they took bows and arrows in their lily hands, and shot at a target in a style that would have gladdened the heart of Maid Marian—nay, of Robin himself;—and one surpassing bright—the Star of Ayr—she held a hawk on her wrist—a tercel gentle—after the fashion of the olden time; and ever as she moved her arm you heard the chiming of silver bells. And her brother—gay and gallant as Sir Tristrem—he blew his tasseled bugle—so sweet, so pure, so wild the music, that when he ceased to breathe, the far-off repeated echoes, faint and dim, you thought died away in heaven, like an angel's voice.

Was it not a Paragon of a Parish? But we have not told you one half of its charms. There was a charm in every nook—and Youth was the master of the spell. Small magicians were we in size, but we were great in might. We had but to open our eyes in the morning, and at one look all nature was beautiful. We have

said nothing about the Burns. The chief was the Yearn—endearingly called the Humby, from a farm near the Manse, and belonging to the minister. Its chief source was, we believe, the Brother Loch. But it whimples with such an infantine voice from the lucid bay, which then knew nor sluice nor dam, that for a while it was scarcely even a rill, and you had to seek for it among the heather. In doing so, ten to one some brooding birdie fluttered off her nest—but not till your next step would have crushed them all—or perhaps—but he had no nest there—a snipe. There it is—betrayed by a line of livelier verdure. Erelong it sparkled within banks of its own and “braes of green bracken,” and as you footed along, shoals of minnows, and perhaps a small trout or two, brastled away to the other side of the shallow, and hid themselves in the shadows. ’Tis a pretty rill now—nor any longer mute; and you hear it murmur. It has acquired confidence on its course, and has formed itself into its first pool—a waterfall, three feet high, with its own tiny rocks, and a single birk—no, it is a rowan—too young yet to bear berries—else might a child pluck the highest cluster. Imperceptibly, insensibly, it grows just like life. The Burn is now in his boyhood; and a bold, bright boy he is—dancing and singing—nor heeding which way he goes along the wild, any more than that wee rosy-cheeked, flaxen-headed girl seems to heed, who drops you a curtsy, and on being asked by you, with your hand on her hair, where she is going, answers wi’ a soft Scottish accent—ah! how sweet—“owre the hill to see my Mither.” Is that a house? No—a fauld. For this is the Washing-Pool. Look around you, and you never saw such perfectly white sheep. They are Cheviots; for the black-faces are on the higher hills to the north of the moor. We see a few rigs of flax—and “lint is in the bell”—the steeping whereof will sadly annoy the bit burnie, but poor people must spin—and as this is not the season, we will think of nothing that can pollute his limpid waters. Symptoms of husbandry! Potato-shaws luxuriating on lazy beds, and a small field with alternate rigs of oats and barley. Yes, that is a house—“an auld clay bigging”—in such Robin Burns was born—in such was rocked the cradle of Pollok. We think we hear two separate liquid voices—and we are right—for from the flats beyond Floak, and away towards Kingswells, comes another yet wilder burnie, and they meet in one at the head of what you would probably call a meadow, but which we call a holm. There seems to be more arable land hereabouts than a stranger could have had any idea of; but it is a long time since the ploughshare traced those almost obliterated furrows on the hillside; and such cultivation is now wisely confined, you observe, to the lower lands. We fear the Yearn—for that is his name now—heretofore he was anonymous—is about to get flat. But we must not grudge him a slumber or a sleep among the saughs, lulled by the murmur of millions of humble bees—we speak within bounds—on their honied flowerage. We are confusing the seasons, for a few minutes ago we spoke of “lint

being in the bell;” but in imagination’s dream how sweetly do the seasons all slide into one another! After sleep comes play, and see and hear now how the merry Yearn goes tumbling over rocks, nor will rest in any one linn, but impatient of each beautiful prison in which one would think he might lie a willing thrall, hurries on as if he were racing against time, nor casts a look at the human dwellings now more frequent near his sides. But he will be stopped by and by, whether he will or no; for there, if we be not much mistaken, there is a mill. But the wheel is at rest—the sluice on the lade is down—with the lade he has nothing more to do than to fill it; and with undiminished volume he wends round the miller’s garden—you see Dusty Jacket is a florist—and now is hidden in a dell; but a dell without any rocks. ’Tis but some hundred yards across from bank to brae—and as you angle along on either side, the sheep and lambs are bleating high overhead; for though the braes are steep, they are all intersected with sheep-walks, and ever and anon among the broom and the brackens are little platforms of close-nibbled greensward, yet not bare—and nowhere else is the pasture more succulent—nor do the young creatures not care to taste the primroses, though were they to live entirely upon them, they could not keep down the profusion—so thickly studded in places are the constellations among sprinklings of single stars. Here the hill-blackbird builds—and here you know why Scotland is called the lintie’s land. What bird lints like the lintwhite? The lark alone. But here there are no larks—a little further down and you will hear one ascending or descending over almost every field of grass or of the tender braird. Down the dell before you, flitting from stone to stone, on short flight seeks the water-pyete—seemingly a witless creature with its bonnie white breast—to wile you away from the crevice, even within the waterfall, that holds its young—or with a cock of her tail she dips and disappears. There is grace in the glancing sandpiper—nor, though somewhat fantastical, is the water-wagtail inelegant—either belle or beau—an outlandish bird that makes himself at home wherever he goes, and, vain as he looks, is contented if but one admire him in a solitary place—though it is true that we have seen them in half dozens on the midden in front of the cottage door. The blue slip of sky overhead has been gradually widening, and the dell is done. Is that snow? A bleachfield. Lassies can bleach their own linen on the green near the pool, “atween twa flowery braes,” as Allan has so sweetly sung, in his truly Scottish pastoral the Gentle Shepherd. But even they could not well do without bleachfields on a larger scale, else dingy would be their smocks and their wedding-sheets. Therefore there is beauty in a bleachfield, and in none more than in Bell’s Meadows. But where is the Burn? They have stolen him out of his bed, and, alas! nothing but stones! Gather up your flies, and away down to yonder grove. There he is like one risen from the dead; and how joyful his resurrection! All the way from this down to the Brigg o’ Humble the angling is admirable,

and the burn has become a stream. You wade now through longer grass—sometimes even up to the knees; and half-forgetting pastoral life, you ejaculate “Speed the plough!” Whitewashed houses—but still thatched—look down on you from among trees, that shelter them in front; while behind is an encampment of stacks, and on each side a line of offices, so that they are snug in every wind that blows. The Auld Brigg is gone, which is a pity; for though the turn was perilous sharp, time had so coloured it, that in a sunny shower we have mistaken it for a rainbow. That’s Humble House, God bless it! and though we cannot here with our bodily sense see the Manse, with our spiritual eye we can see it anywhere. Ay! there is the cock on the Kirk-spire! The wind we see has shifted to the south; and ere we reach the Cart, we shall have to stuff our pockets. The Cart!—ay, the river Cart—not that on which pretty Paisley stands, but the Black Cart, beloved by us chiefly for sake of Cath-Cart Castle, which, when a collegian at Glasgow, we visited every Play-Friday, and deepened the ivy on its walls with our first sombre dreams. The scenery of the Yearn becomes even silvan now; and though still sweet it murmurs to our ear, they no longer sink into our hearts. So let it mingle with the Cart, and the Cart with the Clyde, and the Clyde widen away in all his majesty, till the river becomes a firth, and the firth the sea;—but we shut our eyes, and relapse into the vision that showed us the solitary region dearest to our imagination and our hearts, and opening them on completion of the charm that works within the spirit when no daylight is there, rejoice to find ourselves again sole-sitting on the Green-Brae above the Brother Loch.

Such is an off-hand picture of Our Parish—pray, give us one of yours, that both may gain by comparison. But is ours a true picture? True as Holy Writ—false as any fiction in an Arabian tale. How is this? Perception, memory, imagination, are all modes—states of mind. But mind, as we said before, is one substance, and matter another; and mind never deals with matter without metamorphosing it like a mythologist. Thus truth and falsehood, reality and fiction, become all one and

the same; for they are so essentially blended, that we defy you to show what is biblical—what apocryphal—and what pure romance. How we transpose and dislocate while we limn in aerial colours! Where tree never grew we drop it down centuries old—or we tear out the gnarled oak by the roots, and steep what was once his shadow in sunshine—hills sink at a touch, or at a beck mountains rise; yet amidst all those fluctuations the spirit of the place remains the same; for in that spirit has imagination all along been working, and boon nature smiles on her son as he imitates her creations—but “hers are heavenly, his an empty dream.”

Where lies Our Parish, and what is its name? Seek, and you will find it either in Renfrewshire, or in Utopia, or in the Moon. As for its name, men call it the Mearns. McCulloch, the great Glasgow painter—and in Scotland he has no superior—will perhaps accompany you to what once was the Moor. All the Four Lochs, we understand, are there still; but the Little Loch transmogrified into an auxiliary appurtenance to some cursed Wark—the Brother Loch much exhausted by daily drains upon him by we know not what wretch—the White Loch larched—and the Black Loch of a ghastly blue, cruelly cultivated all close round the brim. From his moor

“The parting genius is with sighing sent;” but sometimes, on bleary-eyed days, he is seen disconsolately sitting in some yet mossy spot among the ruins of his ancient reign. That painter has studied the aspect of the Old Forlorn, and has shown it more than once on bits of canvas not a foot long; and such pictures will survive after the Ghost of the Genius has bade farewell to the ruined solitudes he had haunted ever since the flood, or been laid beneath the yet unprofaned Green-Brae, above the Brother Loch, whence we devoutly trust he will reissue, though ages may have to elapse, to see all his quagmires in their primeval glory, and all his hags more hideously beautiful, as they yawn back again into their former selves, frowning over the burial in their bottoms of all the harvests that had dared to ripen above their heads.

MAY-DAY.

Art thou beautiful, as of old, O wild, moorland, silvan, and pastoral Parish! the Paradise in which our spirit dwelt beneath the glorious dawning of life—can it be, beloved world of boyhood, that thou art indeed beautiful as of old? Though round and round thy boundaries in half an hour could fly the flapping dove—though the martens, wheeling to and fro that ivied and wall-flowered ruin of a Castle, central in its own domain, seem in their more distant flight to glance their crescent wings over a vale rejoicing apart in an-

other kirkspire, yet how rich in streams, and rivulets, and rills, each with its own peculiar murmur—art Thou with thy bold bleak exposure, sloping upwards in ever lustrous undulations to the portals of the East? How endless the interchange of woods and meadows, glens, dells, and broomy nooks, without number, among thy banks and braes! And then of human dwellings—how rises the smoke, ever and anon, into the sky, all neighbouring on each other, so that the cock-crow is heard from homestead to homestead—while

as you wander onwards, each roof still rises unexpectedly—and as solitary, as if it had been far remote. Fairest of Scotland's thousand parishes—neither Highland, nor Lowland—but undulating—let us again use the descriptive word—like the sea in sunset after a day of storms—yes, Heaven's blessing be upon thee! Thou art indeed beautiful as of old!

The same heavens! More blue than any colour that tinges the flowers of earth—like the violet veins of a virgin's bosom. The stillness of those lofty clouds makes them seem whiter than the snow. Return, O lark! to thy grassy nest, in the furrow of the green braided corn, for thy brooding mate can no longer hear thee soaring in the sky. Methinks there is little or no change on these coppice-woods, with their full budding branches all impatient for the spring. Yet twice have axe and bill-hook levelled them with the mossy stones, since among the broomy and briary knolls we sought the gray linnet's nest, or wondered to spy, among the rustling leaves, the robin red-breast, seemingly forgetful of his winter benefactor, man. Surely there were trees here in former times, that now are gone—tall, far-spreading single trees, in whose shade used to lie the ruminating cattle, with the small herd-girl asleep. Gone are they, and dimly remembered as the uncertain shadows of dreams; yet not more forgotten than some living beings with whom our infancy and boyhood held converse—whose voices, laughter, eyes, forehead—hands so often grasped—arms linked in ours as we danced along the braes—have long ceased to be more than images and echoes, incapable of commanding so much as one single tear. Alas! for the treachery of memory to all the holiest human affections, when beguiled by the slow but sure sorcery of time.

It is **MAY-DAY**, and we shall be happy as the season. What although some sad and solemn thoughts come suddenly across us, the day is not at nightfall felt to have been the less delightful, because shadows now and then bedimmed it, and moments almost mournful, of an unhymning hush, took possession of field or forest. We are all alone—a solitary pedestrian; and obeying the fine impulses of a will, whose motives are changeable as the cameleon's hues, our feet shall bear us glancingly along to the merry music of streams—or linger by the silent shores of lochs—or upon the hill-summit pause, ourselves the only spectator of a panorama painted by Spring, for our sole delight—or plunge into the old wood's magnificent exclusion from sky—where at mid-summer, day is as night—though not so now, for this is the season of buds and blossoms; and the cushat's nest is yet visible on the half-leaved boughs, and the sunshine streams in upon the ground-flowers, that in another month will be cold and pale in the forest gloom, almost as those that bedeck the dead when the vault door is closed and all is silence.

What! shall we linger here within a little mile of the **MANSE**, wherein and among its pleasant bounds our boyish life glided murmuring away, like a stream that never, till it leaves its native hills, knows taint or pollution, and not hasten on to the dell, in which nest-

like it is built, and guarded by some wonderful felicity of situation equally against all the winds? No. Thither as yet have we not courage to direct our footsteps—for that venerable Man has long been dead—not one of his ancient household now remains on earth. There the change, though it was gradual and unpainful, according to the gentlest laws of nature, has been entire and complete. The "old familiar faces" we can dream of, but never more shall see—and the voices that are now heard within those walls, what can they ever be to us, when we would fain listen in the silence of our spirit to the echoes of departed years? It is an appalling trial to approach a place where once we have been happier—happier far than ever we can be on this earth again; and a worse evil doth it seem to our imagination to return to Paradise, with a changed and saddened heart, than at first to be driven from it into the outer world, if still permitted to carry thither something of that spirit that had glorified our prime.

But yonder, we see, yet towers the **Sycamore** on the crown of the hill—the first great Tree in the parish that used to get green; for stony as seems the hard glebe, constricted by its bare and gnarled roots, they draw sustenance from afar; and not another knoll on which the sun so delights to pour his beams. Weeks before any other **Sycamore**, and almost as early as the alder or the birch—the **GLORY** or **MOUNT PLEASANT**, for so we schoolboys called it, unfolded itself like a banner. You could then see only the low windows of the dwelling—for eaves, roof, and chimneys all disappeared—and then, when you stood beneath, was not the sound of the bees like the very sound of the sea itself, continuous, unabating, all day long unto evening, when, as if the tide of life had ebbed, there was a perfect silence!

MOUNT PLEASANT! well indeed dost thou deserve the name, bestowed on thee perhaps long ago, not by any one of the humble proprietors, but by the general voice of praise, all eyes being won by thy cheerful beauty. For from that shaded platform, what a sweet vision of fields and meadows, knolls, braes, and hills, uncertain gleamings of a river, the smoke of many houses, and glittering perhaps in the sunshine, the spire of the House of God! To have seen Adam Morrison, the Elder, sitting with his solemn, his austere Sabbath face, beneath the pulpit, with his expressive eyes fixed on the Preacher, you could not but have judged him to be a man of a stern character and austere demeanour. To have seen him at labour on the working-days, you might almost have thought him the serf of some tyrant lord, for into all the toils of the field he carried the force of a mind that would suffer nothing to be undone that strength and skill could achieve; but within the humble porch of his own house, beside his own board, and his own fireside, he was a man to be kindly esteemed by his guests, by his own family tenderly and reverently beloved. His wife was the comeliest matron in the parish, a woman of active habits and a strong mind, but tempering the natural sternness of her husband's character with that genial and jocund cheer

fulness, that of all the lesser virtues is the most efficient to the happiness of a household. One daughter only had they, and we could charm our heart even now, by evoking the vanished from oblivion, and imagining her over and over again in the light of words; but although all objects, animate and inanimate, seem always tinged with an air of sadness when they are past—and as at present we are resolved to be cheerful—obstinately to resist all access of melancholy—an enemy to the pathetic—and a scorner of shedders of tears—therefore let Mary Morrison rest in her grave, and let us paint a pleasant picture of a May-Day afternoon, and enjoy it as it was enjoyed of old, beneath that stately Sycamore, with the grandisonant name of *THE GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT*.

There, under the murmuring shadow round and round that noble stem, used on *MAY-DAY* to be fitted a somewhat fantastic board, all deftly arrayed in homespun drapery, white as the patches of unmelted snow on the distant mountain-head; and on various seats—stumps, stones, stools, creepies, forms, chairs, armless and with no spine, or high-backed and elbowed, and the carving-work thereof most intricate and allegorical—took their places, after much formal ceremony of scraping and bowing, blushing and curtseying, old, young and middle aged, of high and low degree, till in one moment all were hushed by the Minister shutting his eyes, and holding up his hand to ask a blessing. And “well worthy of a grace as lang’s a tether,” was the *MAY-DAY* meal spread beneath the shadow of the *GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT*. But the Minister uttered only a few fervent sentences, and then we all fell to the curds and cream. What smooth, pure, bright burnished beauty on those horn spoons! How apt to the hand the stalk—to the mouth how apt the bowl! Each guest drew closer to his breast the deep broth-plate of delft, rather more than full of curds, many millions times more deliciously desirable even than blanc-mange, and then filled to overflowing with a blessed outpouring of creamy richness that tenaciously descended from an enormous jug, the peculiar expression of whose physiognomy, particularly the nose, we will carry with us to the grave! The dairy at *MOUNT PLEASANT* consisted of twenty cows—almost all spring calvers, and of the Ayrshire breed—so you may guess what cream! The spoon could not stand in it—it was not so thick as that—for that was too thick—but the spoon when placed upright in it, retained its perpendicularity for a while, and then, when uncertain on which side to fall, was grasped by the hand of hungry schoolboy, and steered with its fresh and fragrant freight into a mouth already open in wonder. Never beneath the sun, moon, and stars, were such oatmeal-cakes, peas-scones, and barley-bannocks, as at *MOUNT PLEASANT*. You could have eaten away at them with pleasure, even although not hungry—and yet it was impossible of them to eat too much—Manna that they were!! Seldom indeed is butter yellow on May-day. But the butter of the gudewife of Mount Pleasant—such, and so rich was the old lea-pasture—was coloured

like the crocus, before the young thrushes had left the nest in the honey-suckled corner of the gavel end. Not a single hair in the churn. Then what honey and what jam! The first, not heather, for that is too luscious, especially after such cream, but the pure white virgin honey, like dew shaken from clover, but now *querny* after winter keep; and oh! over a layer of such butter on such barley-bannocks was such honey, on such a day, in such company, and to such palates, too divine to be described by such a pen as that now wielded by such a writer! The Jam! It was of gooseberries—the small black hairy ones—gathered to a very minute from the bush, and boiled to a very moment in the pan! A bannock studded with some dozen or two of such grozets was more beautiful than a corresponding expanse of heaven adorned with as many stars. The question, with the gawsy and generous gudewife of Mount Pleasant, was not—“My dear laddie, which will ye hae—hinny or jam?” but, “Which will ye hae first?” The honey, we well remember, was in two huge brown jugs, or jars, or crocks; the jam, in half a dozen white cans of more moderate dimensions, from whose mouths a veil of thin transparent paper was withdrawn, while, like a steam of rich distilled perfumes, rose a fruity fragrance, that blended with the vernal balminess of the humming Sycamore. There the bees, were all at work for next May-day, happy as ever bees were on Hybla itself; and gone now though be the age of gold, happy as Arcadians were we, nor wanted our festal-day or pipe or song; for to the breath of Harry Wilton, the young English boy, the flute gave forth tunes almost as liquid sweet as those that flowed from the lips of Mary Morrison herself, who alone, of all singers in hut or hall that ever drew tears, left nothing for the heart or the imagination to desire in any one of Scotland’s ancient melodies.

Never had Mary Morrison heard the old ballad-airs sung, except during the mid-day hour of rest, in the corn or hay field—and rude singers are they all—whether male or female voices—although sometimes with a touch of natural pathos that finds its way to the heart. But as the nightingale would sing truly its own variegated song, although it never were to hear any one of its own kind warbling from among the shrub-roots, and the lark though alone on earth, would sing the hymn well known at the gate of heaven, so all untaught but by the nature within her, and inspired by her own delightful genius alone, did Mary Morrison feel all the measures of those ancient melodies, and give them all an expression at once so simple and profound. People who said they did not care about music, especially Scottish music, it was so monotonous and insipid, laid aside their indifferent looks before three notes of the simplest air had left Mary Morrison’s lips, as she sat faintly blushing, less in bashfulness than in her own emotion, with her little hands playing perhaps with flowers, and her eyes fixed on the ground, or raised, ever and anon, to the roof. “In all common things,” would most people say, “she is but a very ordinary girl—but her musical turn is really very singular

indeed;"—but her happy father and mother knew, that in all common things—that is, in all the duties of an humble and innocent life, their Mary was by nature excellent as in the melodies and harmonies of song—and that while her voice in the evening-psalm was as angel's sweet, so was her spirit almost pure as an angel's, and nearly inexperienced of sin.

Proud, indeed, were her parents on that May-day to look upon her—and to listen to her—as their Mary sat beside the young English boy—admired of all observers—and happier than she had ever been in this world before, in the charm of their blended music, and the unconscious affection—sisterly, yet more than sisterly, for brother she had none—that towards one so kind and noble was yearning at her heart.

Beautiful were they both; and when they sat side by side in their music, insensible must that heart have been by whom they were not both admired and beloved. It was thought that they loved one another too, too well; for Harry Wilton was the grandson of an English Peer, and Mary Morrison a peasant's child; but they could not love too well—she in her tenderness—he in his passion—for, with them, life and love was a delightful dream, out of which they were never to be awakened. For as by some secret sympathy, both sickened on the same day—of the same fever—and died at the same hour;—and not from any dim intention of those who buried them, but accidentally, and because the burial-ground of the Minister and the Elder adjoined, were they buried almost in the same grave—for not half a yard of daisied turf divided them—a curtain between the beds on which brother and sister slept.

In their delirium they both talked about each other—Mary Morrison and Harry Wilton—yet their words were not words of love, only of common kindness; for although on their death-beds they did not talk about death, but frequently about that May-day Festival, and other pleasant meetings in neighbour's houses, or in the Manse. Mary sometimes rose up in bed, and in imagination joined her voice to that of the flute which to his lips was to breath no more; and even at the very self-same moment—so it wonderfully was—did he tell all to be hushed, for that Mary Morrison was about to sing the Flowers of the Forest.

Methinks that no deep impressions of the past, although haply they may sleep for ever, and seem as if they had ceased to be, are ever utterly obliterated; but that they may, one and all, reappear at some hour or other however distant, legible as at the very moment they were first engraven on the memory. Not by the power of meditation are the long ago vanished thoughts or emotions restored to us, in which we found delight or disturbance; but of themselves do they seem to arise, not undesired indeed, but unbidden, like sea-birds that come unexpectedly floating up into some inland vale, because, unknown to us who wonder at them, the tide is flowing and the breezes blow from the main. Bright as the living image stands now before us the ghost—for what else is it than the ghost—of Mary Morrison, just as she stood before us on one particular day—in one par-

ticular place, innumerable years ago! It was at the close of one of those midsummer days which melt away into twilight, rather than into night, although the stars are visible, and bird and beast are asleep. All by herself, as she walked along between the braes, was she singing a hymn—

And must this body die?

This mortal frame decay?

And must these feeble limbs of mine

Lie mouldering in the clay?

Not that the child had any thought of death, for she was as full of life as the star above her was of lustre—tamed though they both were by the holy hour. At our bidding she renewed the strain that had ceased as we met, and continued to sing it while we parted, her voice dying away in the distance, like an angel's from a broken dream. Never heard we that voice again, for in three little weeks it had gone, to be extinguished no more, to join the heavenly choirs at the feet of the Redeemer.

Did both her parents lose all love to life, when their sole daughter was taken away? And did they die finally of broken hearts? No—such is not the natural working of the human spirit, if kept in repair by pure and pious thought. Never were they so happy indeed as they had once been—nor was their happiness of the same kind. Oh! different far in resignation that often wept when it did not repine—in faith that now held a tenderer commerce with the skies! Smiles were not very long of being again seen at Mount Pleasant. An orphan cousin of Mary's—they had been as sisters—took her place, and filled it too, as far as the living can ever fill the place of the dead. Common cares continued for a while to occupy the Elder and his wife, for there were not a few to whom their substance was to be a blessing. Ordinary observers could not have discerned any abatement of his activities in field or market; but others saw that the toil to him was now but a duty that had formerly been a delight. Mount Pleasant was let to a relative, and the Morrisons retired to a small house, with a garden, a few hundred yards from the kirk. Let him be strong as a giant, infirmities often come on the hard-working man before you can well call him old. It was so with Adam Morrison. He broke down fast we have been told, in his sixtieth year, and after that partook but of one sacrament. Not in tales of fiction alone do those who have long loved and well, lay themselves down and die in each other's arms. Such happy deaths are recorded on humble tombstones; and there is one on which this inscription may be read—"HERE LIE THE BODIES OF ADAM MORRISON AND OF HELEN ARMOUR HIS SPOUSE. THEY DIED ON THE 1ST OF MAY 17—. HERE ALSO LIES THE BODY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, MARY MORRISON, WHO DIED JUNE 2, 17—." The headstone is a granite slab—as they almost all are in that kirkyard—and the kirk itself is of the same enduring material. But touching that grave is a Marble Monument, white almost as the very snow, and, in the midst of the emblazonry of death, adorned with the armorial bearings belonging to a family of the high-born.

Sworn Brother of our soul! during the

bright ardours of boyhood, when the present was all-sufficient in its own bliss, the past soon forgotten, and the future unfeared, what might have been thy lot, beloved Harry Wilton, had thy span of life been prolonged to this very day? Better—oh! far better was it for thee and thine that thou didst so early die; for it seemeth that a curse is on that lofty lineage; and that, with all their genius, accomplishments, and virtues, dishonour comes and goes, a familiar and privileged guest, out and in their house. Shame never veiled the light of those bold eyes, nor tamed the eloquence of those sunny lips, nor ever for a single moment bowed down that young princely head that, like a fast-growing flower, seemed each successive morning to be visibly rising up towards a stately manhood. But the time was not far distant, when to thee life would have undergone a rueful transformation. Thy father, expatriated by the spells of a sorceress, and forced into foreign countries, to associate with vice, worthlessness, profligacy, and crime! Thy mother, dead of a broken heart! And that lovely sister, who came to the Manse with her jewelled hair—But all these miserable things who could prophesy, at the hour when we and the weeping villagers laid thee, apart from the palace and the burial-vault of thy high-born ancestors, without anthem or organ-peal, among the humble dead? Needless and foolish were all those floods of tears. In thy brief and beautiful course, nothing have we who loved thee to lament or condemn. In few memories, indeed, doth thy image now survive; for in process of time what young face fadeth not away from eyes busied with the shows of this living world? What young voice is not bedumbed to ears for ever filled with its perplexing din? Yet thou, Nature, on this glorious May-day, rejoicing in all the plenitude of thy bliss—we call upon thee to bear witness to the intensity of our never-dying grief! Ye fields, that long ago we so often trode together, with the wind-swept shadows hovering about our path—Ye streams, whose murmur awoke our imaginations, as we lay reading, or musing together in day-dreams, among the broomy braes—Ye woods, where we started at the startled cushat, or paused, without a word, to hear the creature's solitary moans and murmurs deepening the far off hush, already so profound—Ye moors and mosses, black yet beautiful, with your peat-trenches overshadowed by the heather-blossoms that scented the wilderness afar—where the little maiden, sent from the shieling on errands to town or village in the country below, seemed, as we met her in the sunshine, to rise up before us for our delight, like a fairy from the desert bloom—Thou loch, remote in thy treeless solitude, and with nought reflected in thy many-springed waters but those low pastoral hills of excessive green, and the white-barred blue of heaven—no creature on its shores but our own selves, keenly angling in the breezes, or lying in the shaded sunshine, with some book of old ballads, or strain of some Immortal yet alive on earth—one and all, bear witness to our undying affection, that silently now feeds on grief! And, oh! what overflowing thoughts did that shout of ours

now awaken from the hanging tower of the Old Castle—"Wilton, Wilton!" The name of the long-ago buried faintly and afar-off repeated by an echo!

A pensive shade has fallen across MAY-DAY; and while the sun is behind those castellated clouds, our imagination is willing to retire into the saddest places of memory, and gather together stories and tales of tears. And many such there are, annually sprinkled all round the humble huts of our imaginative and religious land, even like the wild-flowers that, in endless succession, disappearing and reappearing in their beauty, Spring drops down upon every brae. And as oftentimes some one particular tune, some one pathetic but imperfect and fragmentary part of an old melody, will nearly touch the heart, when it is dead to the finest and most finished strain; so now a faint and dim tradition comes upon us, giving birth to uncertain and mysterious thoughts. It is an old Tradition. They were called the BLESSED FAMILY! Far up at the head of yonder glen of old was their dwelling, and in their garden sparkled the translucent well that is the source of the stream that animates the parish with a hundred waterfalls. Father, mother, and daughter—it was hard to say which of the three was the most beloved! Yet they were not native here, but brought with them, from some distant place, the soft and silvery accents of the pure English tongue, and manners most gracious in their serene simplicity; while over a life composed of acts of charity was spread a stillness that nothing ever disturbed—the stillness of a thoughtful pity for human sins and sorrows, yet not unwilling to be moved to smiles by the breath of joy. In those days the very heart of Scotland was distracted—persecution scattered her prayers—and during the summer months, families remained shut up in fear within their huts, as if the snowdrifts of winter had blocked up and buried their doors. It was as if the shadow of a thunder-cloud hung over all the land, so that men's hearts quaked as they looked up to heaven—when, lo! all at once, Three gracious Visitants appeared! Imagination invested their foreheads with a halo; and as they walked on their missions of mercy, exclaimed—How beautiful are their feet! Few words was the Child ever heard to speak, except some words of prayer; but her image-like stillness breathed a blessing wherever it smiled, and all the little maidens loved her, when hushed almost into awe by her spiritual beauty, as she knelt with them in their morning and evening orisons. The Mother's face, too, it is said, was pale as a face of grief, while her eyes seemed always happy, and a tone of thanksgiving was in her voice. Her Husband leant upon her on his way to the grave—for his eye's excessive brightness glittered with death—and often, as he prayed beside the sick-bed, his cheek became like ashes, for his heart in a moment ceased to beat, and then, as if about to burst in agony, sounded audibly in the silence. Journeying on did they all seem to heaven; yet as they were passing by, how loving and how full of mercy! To them belonged some blessed power to wave away the sword that

would fain have smitten the Saints. The dew-drops on the greensward before the cottage-door, they suffered not to be polluted with blood. Guardian Angels were they thought to be, and such indeed they were, for what else are the holy powers of innocence?—Guardian Angels sent to save some of God's servants on earth from the choking tide and the scorching fire. Often, in the clear and starry nights, did the dwellers among all these little dells, and up along all these low hillsides, hear music flowing down from heaven, responsive to the hymns of the Blessed Family. Music without the syllabing of words—yet breathing worship, and with the spirit of piety filling all the Night-Heavens. One whole day and night passed by, and not a hut had been enlightened by their presence. Perhaps they had gone away without warning as they had come—having been sent on another mission. With soft steps one maiden, and then another entered the door, and then was heard the voice of weeping and of loud lament. The three lay, side by side, with their pale faces up to heaven. Dora, for that is the name tradition has handed down—Dorothea, the gift of God, lay between her Father and her Mother, and all their hands were lovingly and peacefully entwined. No agonies had been there—unknown what hand, human or divine, had closed their eyelids and composed their limbs; but there they lay as if asleep, not to be awakened by the burst of sunshine that dazzled upon their smiling countenances, cheek to cheek, in the awful beauty of united death.

The deep religion of that troubled time had sanctified the Strangers almost into an angelic character; and when the little kirk-bells were again heard tinkling through the air of peace, (the number of the martyrs being complete,) the beauty with which their living foreheads had been invested, reappeared in the eyes of imagination, as the Poets whom Nature kept to herself walked along the moonlight hills. "The Blessed Family," which had been as a household word, appertaining to them while they lived, now when centuries have gone by, is still full of a dim but divine meaning; the spirit of the tradition having remained, while its framework has almost fallen into decay.

How beautifully emerges that sun-stricken Cottage from the rocks, that all around it are floating in a blue vapoury light! Were we so disposed, methinks we could easily write a little book entirely about the obscure people that have lived and died about that farm, by name **LOGAN BRAES**. Neither is it without its old traditions. One May-day long ago—some two centuries since—that rural festival was there interrupted by a thunder-storm, and the party of youths and maidens, driven from the budding arbours, were all assembled in the ample kitchen. The house seemed to be in the very heart of the thunder; and the master began to read, without declaring it to be a religious service, a chapter of the Bible; but the frequent flashes of lightning so blinded him, that he was forced to lay down the Book, and all then sat still without speaking a word; many with pale faces, and none without a mingled sense of awe and fear. The maiden forgot her bashful-

ness as the rattling peals shook the roof-tree, and hid her face in her lover's bosom; the children crept closer and closer, each to some protecting knee, and the dogs came all into the house, and lay down in dark places. Now and then there was a convulsive, irrepressible, but half-stifled shriek—some sobbed—and a loud hysterical laugh from one overcome with terror sounded ghastly between the deepest of all dread repose—that which separates one peal from another, when the flash and the roar are as one, and the thick air smells of sulphur. The body feels its mortal nature, and shrinks as if about to be withered into nothing. Now the muttering thunder seems to have changed its place to some distant cloud—now, as if returning to blast those whom it had spared, waxes louder and fiercer than before—till the Great Tree that shelters the house is shivered with a noise like the masts of a ship carried away by the board. "Look, father, look—see yonder is an Angel all in white, descending from heaven!" said little Alice, who had already been almost in the attitude of prayer, and now clasped her hands together, and steadfastly, and without fear of the lightning, eyed the sky. "One of God's Holy Angels—one of those who sing before the Lamb!" And with an inspired rapture the fair child sprung to her feet. "See ye her not—see ye her not—father—mother? Lo! she beckons to me with a palm in her hand, like one of the palms in that picture in our Bible when our Saviour is entering into Jerusalem! There she comes, nearer and nearer the earth—Oh! pity, forgive, and have mercy on me, thou most beautiful of all the Angels—even for His name's sake." All eyes were turned towards the black heavens, and then to the raving child. Her mother clasped her to her bosom, afraid that terror had turned her brain—and her father going to the door, surveyed an ampler space of the sky. She flew to his side, and clinging to him again, exclaimed in a wild outcry, "On her forehead a star! on her forehead a star! And oh! on what lovely wings she is floating away, away into eternity! The Angel, Father, is calling me by my Christian name, and I must no more abide on earth; but, touching the hem of her garment, be wafted away to heaven!" Sudden as a bird let loose from the hand, darted the maiden from her father's bosom, and with her face upward to the skies, pursued her flight. Young and old left the house, and at that moment the forked lightning came from the crashing cloud, and struck the whole tenement into ruins. Not a hair on any head was singed; and with one accord the people fell down upon their knees. From the eyes of the child, the Angel, or vision of the Angel, had disappeared; but on her return to heaven, the Celestial heard the hymn that rose from those that were saved, and above all the voices, the small sweet silvery voice of her whose eyes alone were worthy of beholding a Saint Transfigured.

For several hundred years has that farm belonged to the family of the Logans, nor has son or daughter ever stained the name—while some have imparted to it, in its humble annals what well may be called lustre. Many a time have we stood when a boy, all alone, beginning

to be disturbed by the record of heroic or holy lives, in the kirkyard, beside the GRAVE OF THE MARTYRS—the grave in which Christian and Hannah Logan, mother and daughter, were interred. Many a time have we listened to the story of their deaths, from the lips of one who well knew how to stir the hearts of the young, till “from their eyes they wiped the tears that sacred pity had engendered.” Nearly a hundred years old was she that eloquent narrator—the Minister’s mother—yet she could hear a whisper, and read the Bible without spectacles—although we sometimes used to suspect her of pretending to be reading off the Book, when, in fact, she was reciting from memory. The old lady often took a walk in the kirkyard—and being of a pleasant and cheerful nature, though in religious principle inflexibly austere, many were the most amusing anecdotes that she related to us and our compeers, all huddled round her, “where heaved the turf in many a mouldering heap.” But the evening converse was always sure to have a serious termination—and the venerable matron could not be more willing to tell, than we to hear again and again, were it for the twentieth repetition, some old tragic event that gathered a deeper interest from every recital, as if on each we became better acquainted with the characters of those to whom it had befallen, till the chasm that time had dug between them and us disappeared, and we felt for the while that their happiness or misery and ours were essentially interdependent. At first she used, we well remember, to fix her solemn spirit-like eyes on our faces, to mark the different effects her story produced on her hearers; but ere long she became possessed wholly by the pathos of her own narrative, and with fluctuating features and earnest action of head and hands, poured forth her eloquence, as if soliloquizing among the tombs.

“Ay, ay, my dear boys, that is the grave o’ the Martyrs. My father saw them die. The tide o’ the far-ebbed sea was again beginning to flow, but the sands o’ the bay o’ death lay sae dry, that there were but few spots where a bairn could hae wat its feet. Thousands and tens o’ thousands were standing a’ roun’ the edge of the bay—that was in shape just like that moon—and then twa stakes were driven deep into the sand, that the waves o’ the returning sea might na loosen them—and my father, who was but a boy like ane o’ yourselves noo, waes me, didna he see wi’ his ain een Christian Logan, and her wee dochter Hannah, for she was but eleven years auld—hurried along by the enemies o’ the Lord, and tied to their accursed stakes within the power o’ the sea. He who holds the waters in the hollow o’ his hand, thocht my father, will not suffer them to choke the prayer within those holy lips—but what kent he o’ the dreadful judgments o’ the Almighty? Dreadfu’ as those judgments seemed to be, o’ a’ that crowd o’ mortal creatures there were but only twa that drew their breath without a shudder—and these twa were Christian Logan and her beautiful wee dochter Hannah, wi’ her rosy cheeks, for they blanched not in that last extremity, ner blue ee:, and her gowden hair, that glit-

tered like a star in the darkness o’ that dismal day. ‘Mother, be not afraid,’ she was heard to say, when the foam o’ the first wave broke about their feet—and just as these words were uttered, all the great black clouds melted away from the sky, and the sun shone forth in the firmament like the all-seeing eye of God. The martyrs turned their faces a little towards one another, for the cords could not wholly hinder them, and wi’ voices as steady and as clear as ever they sang the psalm within the walls o’ that kirk, did they, while the sea was mounting up—up from knee—waist—breast—neck—chin—lip—sing praises and thanksgivings unto God. As soon as Hannah’s voice was drowned, it seemed as if her mother, before the water reached her own lips, bowed and gave up the ghost. While the people were all gazing, the heads of both martyrs disappeared, and nothing then was to be seen on the face o’ the waters, but here and there a bit white breaking wave or silly sea-bird floating on the flow o’ the tide into the bay. Back and back had aye fallen the people, as the tide was roarin’ on wi’ a hollow soun’—and now that the water was high aboon the heads o’ the martyrs, what chained that dismal congregation to the sea-shore? It was the countenance o’ a man that had suddenly come down frae his hiding-place among the moors—and who now knew that his wife and daughter were bound to stakes deep down in the waters o’ the very bay that his eyes beheld rolling, and his ears heard roaring—all the while that there was a God in heaven! Naeboddy could speak to him—although they all beseeched their Maker to have compassion upon him, and not to let his heart break and his reason fail. ‘The stakes! the stakes! O Jesus! point out to me, with thy own scarred hand, the place where my wife and daughter are bound to the stakes—and I may yet bear them up out of the sand, and bring the bodies ashore—to be restored to life! O brethren, brethren!’—said ye that my Christian and my Hannah have been for an hour below the sea? And was it from fear of fifty armed men, that so many thousand fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, rescued them not from such cruel, cruel death?’ After uttering mony mair siclike raving words, he suddenly plunged into the sea, and, being a strong swimmer, was soon far out into the bay—and led by some desperate instinct to the very place where the stakes were fixed in the sand. Perfectly resigned had the martyrs been to their doom—but in the agonies o’ that horrible death, there had been some struggles o’ the mortal body, and the weight o’ the waters had borne down the stakes, so that, just as if they had been lashed to a spar to enable them to escape from shipwreck, baith the bodies came floatin’ to the surface, and his hand grasped, without knowing it, his ain Hannah’s gowden hair—sarely defiled, ye may weel think, wi’ the sand—baith their faces changed frae what they ance were by the wrench o’ death. Father, mother, and daughter came a’tgether to the shore—and there was a cry went far and wide, up even to the hiding-places o’ the faithfu’ among the hags

and cleuchs i' the moors, that the sea had given up the living, and that the martyrs were triumphant, even in this world, over the powers o' Sin and o' Death. Yea, they were indeed triumphant;—and well might the faithful sing aloud in the desert, 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' for these three bodies were but as the weeds on which they lay stretched out to the pitying gaze of the multitude, but their spirits had gane to heaven, to receive the eternal rewards o' sanctity and truth."

Not a house in all the parish—scarcely excepting Mount Pleasant itself—all round and about which our heart could in some dreamy hour raise to life a greater multitude of dear old remembrances, all touching ourselves, than LOGAN BRAES. The old people when we first knew them, we used to think somewhat apt to be surly—for they were Seceders—and owing to some unavoidable prejudices, which we were at no great pains to vanquish, we Manse-boys recognised something repulsive in that most respectable word. Yet for the sake of that sad story of the Martyrs, there was always something affecting to us in the name of Logan Braes; and though Beltane was of old a Pagan Festival, celebrated with grave idolatries round fires a-blaze on a thousand hills, yet old Laurence Logan would sweeten his vinegar aspect on May-day, would wipe out a score of wrinkles, and calm, as far as that might be, the terrors of his shaggy eyebrows. A little gentleness of manner goes a long way with such young folk as we were all then, when it is seen naturally and easily worn for our sakes, and in sympathy with our accustomed glee, by one who in his ordinary deportment may have added the austerity of religion to the venerableness of old age. Smiles from old Laurence Logan, the Seceder, were like rare sun-glances in the gloom—and made the hush of his house pleasant as a more cheerful place; for through the restraint laid on reverent youth by feeling akin to fear, the heart ever and anon bounded with freedom in the smile of the old man's eyes. Plain was his own apparel—a suit of the hoddie-gray. His wife, when in full dress, did not remind us of a Quakeress, for a Quakeress then had we never seen—but we often think now, when in company with a sensible, cheerful, and comely-visaged matron of that sect, of her of Logan Braes. No waster was she of her tears, or her smiles, or her words, or her money, or her meal—either among those of her own blood, or the stranger or the beggar that was within her gates. You heard not her foot on the floor—yet never was she idle—moving about in doors and out, from morning till night, so placid and so composed, and always at small cost dressed so decently, so becomingly to one who was not yet old, and had not forgotten—why should she not remember it!—that she was esteemed in youth a beauty, and that it was not for want of a richer and younger lover, that she agreed at last to become the wife of the Laird of Logan Braes.

Their family consisted of two sons and a niece;—and be thou who thou mayest that hast so far read our May-day, we doubt not that thine

eyes will glance—however rapidly—over another page, nor fling it contemptuously aside, because amidst all the chance and change of administrations, ministries, and ministers in high places, there murmur along the channels of our memory "the simple annals of the poor," like unpolluted streams that sweep not by city walls.

Never were two brothers more unlike in all things—in mind, body, habits, and disposition—than Lawrie and Willie Logan—and we see, as in a glass, at this very moment, both their images. "Wee Wise Willie"—for by that name he was known over several parishes—was one of those extraordinary creatures that one may liken to a rarest plant, which nature sows here and there—sometimes for ever unregarded—among the common families of Flowers. Early sickness had been his lot—continued with scarcely any interruption from his cradle to school-years—so that not only was his stature stunted, but his whole frame was delicate in the extreme; and his pale small-featured face, remarkable for large, soft, down-looking, hazel eyes, dark-lashed in their lustre, had a sweet feminine character, that corresponded well with his voice, his motions, and his in-door pursuits—all serene and composed, and interfering with the outgoings of no other living thing. All sorts of scholarship, such as the parish schoolmaster knew, he mastered as if by intuition. His slate was quickly covered with long calculations, by which the most puzzling questions were solved; and ere he was nine years old, he had made many pretty mechanical contrivances with wheels and pulleys, that showed in what direction lay the natural bent of his genius. Languages, too, the creature seemed to see into with quickest eyes, and with quickest ears to catch their sounds—so that, at the same tender age, he might have been called a linguist, sitting with his Greek and Latin books on a stool beside him by the fireside during the long winter nights. All the neighbours who had any books, cheerfully lent them to "Wee Wise Willie," and the Manse-boys gave him many a supply. At the head of every class he, of course, was found—but no ambition had he to be there; and like a bee that works among many thousand others on the clover-lea, heedless of their murmurs, and intent wholly on its own fragrant toil, did he go from task to task—although that was no fitting name for the studious creature's meditations on all he read or wrought—no more a task for him to grow in knowledge and in thought, than for a lily of the field to lift up its head towards the sun. That child's religion was like all the other parts of his character—as prone to tears as that of other children, when they read of the Divine Friend dying for them on the cross; but it was profounder far than theirs, when it shed no tears, and only made the paleness of his countenance more like that which we imagine to be the paleness of a phantom. No one ever saw him angry, complaining, or displeased; for angelical indeed was his temper, purified, like gold in fire, by suffering. He shunned not the company of other children, but loved all, as by them all he was more than beloved. In few

of their plays could he take an active share; but sitting a little way off, still attached to the merry brotherhood, though in their society he had no part to enact, he read his book on the knoll, or, happy dreamer, sunk away among the visions of his own thoughts. There was poetry in that child's spirit, but it was too essentially blended with his whole happiness in life, often to be embodied in written words. A few compositions were found in his own small beautiful handwriting after his death—hymns and psalms. Prayers, too, had his heart indited—but they were not in measured language—framed, in his devout simplicity on the model of our Lord's. How many hundred times have we formed a circle round him in the gloaming, all sitting or lying on the greensward, before the dews had begun to descend, listening to his tales and stories of holy or heroic men and women, who had been greatly good and glorious in the days of old! Not undeared to his imagination were the patriots, who, living and dying, loved the liberties of the land—Tell—Bruce—or Wallace, he in whose immortal name a thousand rocks rejoice, while many a wood bears it on its summits as they are swinging to the storm. Weak as a reed that is shaken in the wind, or the stalk of a flower that tremblingly sustains its blossoms beneath the dews that feed their transitory lustre, was he whose lips were so eloquent to read the eulogies of mighty men of war riding mailed through bloody battles. What matters it that this frame of dust be frail, and of tiny size—still may it be the tenement of a lordly spirit. But high as such warfare was, it satisfied not that thoughtful child—for other warfare there was to read of, which was to him a far deeper and more divine delight—the warfare waged by good men against the legions of sin, and closed triumphantly in the eye of God—let this world deem as it will—on obscurest death-beds, or at the stake, or on the scaffold, where a profounder even than Sabbath silence glorifies the martyr far beyond any shout that from the immense multitude would have torn the concave of the heavens.

What a contrast to that creature was his elder brother! Lawrie was eighteen years old when first we visited Logan Braes, and was a perfect hero in strength and stature—Bob Howie alone his equal—but Bob was then in the West Indies. In the afternoons, after his work was over in the fields or in the barn, he had pleasure in getting us Manse-boys to accompany him to the Moor-Lochs for an hour's angling or two in the evening, when the large trouts came to the gravelly shallows, and, as we waded midleg-deep, would sometimes take the fly among our very feet. Or he would go with us into the heart of the great wood, to show us where the foxes had their earths—the party being sometimes so fortunate as to see the cubs disporting at the mouth of the briery aperture in the strong and root-bound soil. Or we followed him, so far as he thought it safe for us to do so, up the foundations of the castle, and in fear and wonder that no repetition of the adventurous feat ever diminished, saw him take the young starling from the crevice beneath the tuft of wall-flowers. What was there

of the bold and daring that Lawrie Logan was not, in our belief, able to perform? We were all several years younger—boys from nine to fifteen—and he had shot up into sudden manhood—not only into its shape but its strength—yet still the boyish spirit was fresh within him, and he never wearied of us in such excursions. The minister had a good opinion of his principles, knowing how he had been brought up, and did not discountenance his visits to the Manse, nor ours to Logan Braes. Then what danger could we be in, go where we might, with one who had more than once shown how eager he was to risk his own life when that of another was in jeopardy? Generous and fearless youth! To thee we owed our own life—although seldom is that rescue now remembered—for what will not in this turmoiling world be forgotten! when in pride of the newly-acquired art of swimming, we had ventured—with our clothes on too—some ten yards into the Brother-Loch, to disentangle our line from the water-lilies. It seemed that a hundred cords had got entangled round our legs, and our heart quaked too desperately to suffer us to shriek—but Lawrie Logan had his hand on us in a minute, and brought us to shore as easily as a Newfoundland dog lands a bit of floating wood.

But that was a momentary danger, and Lawrie Logan ran but small risk, you will say, in saving us; so let us not extol that instance of his intrepidity. But fancy to yourself, gentle reader, the hideous mouth of an old coal-pit, that had not been worked for time immemorial, overgrown with thorns, and briers, and brackens, but still visible from a small mount above it, for some yards down its throat—the very throat of death and perdition. But can you fancy also the childish and superstitious terror with which we all regarded that coal-pit, for it was said to be a hundred fathom deep—with water at the bottom—so that you had to wait for many moments—almost a minute—before you heard a stone, first beating against its sides—from one to the other—plunge at last into the pool profound. In that very field, too, a murder had been perpetrated, and the woman's corpse flung by her sweetheart into that coal-pit. One day some unaccountable impulse had led a band of us into that interdicted field—which we remember was not arable—but said to be a place where a hare was always sure to be found sitting among the binweeds and thistles. A sort of thrilling horror urged us on closer and closer to the mouth of the pit—when Wee Wise Willie's foot slipping on the brae, he bounded with inexplicable force along—in among the thorns, briers, and brackens—through the whole hanging mat and without a shriek, down—down—down into destruction. We all saw it happen—every one of us—and it is scarcely too much to say, that we were for a while all mad with horror. Yet we felt ourselves borne back instinctively from the horrible pit—and as aid we could give none, we listened if we could hear any cry—but there was none—and we all flew together out of the dreadful field, and again collecting ourselves together, feared to separate on the different roads to our homes.

"Oh! can it be that our Wee Wise Willie has this moment died sic a death—and no a single ane amang us a' greetin' for his sake?" said one of us aloud; and then indeed did we burst out into rueful sobbing, and ask one another who could carry such tidings to Logan Braes? All at once we heard a clear, rich, mellow whistle as of a blackbird—and there with his favourite colley, searching for a stray lamb among the knolls, was Lawrie Logan, who hailed us with a laughing voice, and then asked us, "Whare is Wee Willie? hae ye flung him like another Joseph into the pit?" The consternation of our faces could not be misunderstood—whether we told him or not what had happened we do not know—but he staggered as if he would have fallen down—and then ran off with amazing speed—not towards Logan Braes—but the village. We continued helplessly to wander about back and forwards along the near edge of a wood, when we beheld a multitude of people rapidly advancing, and in a few minutes they surrounded the mouth of the pit. It was about the very end of the hay-harvest—and many ropes that had been employed that very day in the leading of the hay of the Landlord of the Inn, who was also an extensive farmer, were tied together to the length of at least twenty fathom. Hope was quite dead—but her work is often done by Despair. For a while there was confusion all around the pit-mouth, but with a white fixed face and glaring eyes, Lawrie Logan advanced to the very brink, with the rope bound in many firm folds around him, and immediately behind him stood his gray-headed father, unbonneted, just as he had risen from a prayer. "Is't my ain father that's gaun to help me to gang doon to bring up Willie's body? O! merciful God, what a judgment is this! Father—father—Oh! lie down at some distance awa' frae the sight o' this place. Robin Alison, and Gabriel Strang, and John Borland, 'll haud the ropes firm and safe. O, father—father—lie down, a bit apart frae the crowd; and have mercy upon him—O thou, great God, have mercy upon him!" But the old man kept his place; and the only one son who now survived to him disappeared within the jaws of the same murderous pit, and was lowered slowly down, nearer and nearer to his little brother's corpse. They had spoken to him of foul air, of which to breathe is death, but he had taken his resolution, and not another word had been said to shake it. And now, for a short time, there was no weight at the line, except that of its own length. It was plain that he had reached the bottom of the pit. Silent was all that congregation, as if assembled in divine worship. Again, there was a weight at the rope, and in a minute or two, a voice was heard far down the pit that spread a sort of wild hope—else, why should it have spoken at all—and lo! the child—not like one of the dead—clasped in the arms of his brother, who was all covered with dust and blood. "Fall all down on your knees—in the face o' heaven, and sing praises to God, for my brother is yet alive!"

During that Psalm, father, mother, and both their sons—the rescuer and the rescued—and

their sweet cousin too, Annie Raeburn, the orphan, were lying embraced in speechless—almost senseless trances; for the agony of such a deliverance was more than could well be endured by mortal creatures be endured.

The child himself was the first to tell how his life had been miraculously saved. A few shrubs had for many years been growing out of the inside of the pit, almost as far down as the light could reach, and among them had he been entangled in his descent, and held fast. For days, and weeks, and months, after that deliverance, few persons visited Logan Braes, for it was thought that old Laurence's brain had received a shock from which it might never recover; but the trouble that tried him subsided, and the inside of the house was again quiet as before, and its hospitable door open to all the neighbours.

Never forgetful of his primal duties had been that bold youth—but too apt to forget the many smaller ones that are wrapped round a life of poverty like invisible threads, and that cannot be broken violently or carelessly, without endangering the calm consistency of all its ongoing, and ultimately causing perhaps great losses, errors, and distress. He did not keep evil society—but neither did he shun it: and having a pride in feats of strength and activity, as was natural to a stripling whose corporeal faculties could not be excelled, he frequented all meetings where he was likely to fall in with worthy competitors, and in such trials of power, by degrees acquired a character for recklessness, and even violence, of which prudent men prognosticated evil, and that sorely disturbed his parents, who were, in their quiet retreat, lovers of all peace. With what wonder and admiration did all the Manse-boys witness and hear reported the feats of Lawrie Logan! It was he who, in pugilistic combat, first vanquished Black King Carey the Egyptian, who travelled the country with two wives and a wagon of Staffordshire pottery, and had struck the "Yokel," as he called Lawrie, in the midst of all the tents on Led-drie Green, at the great annual Baldernoch fair. Six times did the bare and bronzed Egyptian bite the dust—nor did Lawrie Logan always stand against the blows of one whose provincial fame was high in England, as the head of the Rough-and-Ready School. Even now—as in an ugly dream—we see the combatants alternately prostrate, and returning to the encounter, covered with mire and blood. All the women left the Green, and the old men shook their heads at such unchristian work; but Lawrie Logan did not want backers in the shepherds and the ploughmen, to see fair play against all the attempts of the Showmen and the Newcastle horse-cowpers, who laid their money thick on the King; till a right-hander in the pit of the stomach, which had nearly been the gipsy's everlasting quietus, gave the victory to Lawrie, amid acclamations that would have fitter graced a triumph in a better cause. But that day was an evil day to all at Logan Braes. A recruiting sergeant got Lawrie into the tent, over which floated the colours of the 42d Regiment, and in the intoxication of victory, whisky, and the bagpipe, the

young champion was as fairly enlisted into his Majesty's service, as ever young girl, without almost knowing it, was married at Gretna-Green; and as the 42d were under orders to sail in a week, gold could not have bought off such a man, and Lawrie Logan went on board a transport.

Logan Braes was not the same place—indeed, the whole parish seemed altered—after Lawrie was gone, and our visits were thenceforth any thing but cheerful ones, going by turns to inquire for Willie, who seemed to be pining away—not in any deadly disease, but just as if he himself knew, that without ailing much he was not to be a long liver. Yet nearly two years passed on, and all that time the principle of life had seemed like a flickering flame within him, that when you think it expiring or expired, streams up again with surprising brightness, and continues to glimmer ever steadily with a protracted light. Every week—nay, almost every day, they feared to lose him—yet there he still was at morning and evening prayers. The third spring after the loss of his brother was remarkably mild, and breathing with west-winds that came softened over many woody miles from the sea. He seemed stronger, and more cheerful, and expressed a wish that the Manse-boys, and some others of his companions, would come to Logan Braes, and once again celebrate May-day. There we all sat at the long table, and both parents did their best to look cheerful during the feast. Indeed, all that had, once been harsh and forbidding in the old man's looks and manners, was now softened down by the perpetual yearnings at his heart towards "the distant far and absent long," nor less towards him that peaceful and pious child whom every hour he saw, or thought he saw, awaiting a call from the eternal voice. Although sometimes sadness fell across us like a shadow, yet the hours passed on as May-day hours should do; and what with our many-toned talk and laughter, the cooing of the pigeons on the roof, and the twittering of the swallows beneath the eaves, and the lark-songs ringing like silver bells over all the heavens, it seemed a day that ought to bring good tidings—or, the Soldier himself returning from the wars to bless the eyes of his parents once more, so that they might die in peace. "Heaven hold us in its keeping, for there's his wraith!" ejaculated Annie Raeburn. "It passed before the window, and my Lawrie, I now know, is with the dead!"—Bending his stately head beneath the lintel of the door, in the dress, and with the bearing of a soldier, Lawrie Logan stepped again across his father's threshold and, ere he well uttered "God be with you all!" Willie was within his arms, and on his bosom. His father and his mother rose not from their chairs, but sat still, with faces like ashes. But we boys could not resist our joy, and shouted his name aloud—while Luath, from his sleep in the corner, leapt on his master breast-high, and whining his dumb delight, frisked round him as of yore, when impatient to snuff the dawn on the hill-side. "Let us go out and play," said a boy's voice, and issuing somewhat seriously into the sunshine, we left the

family within to themselves, and then walked away, without speaking, down to the Bridge.

After the lapse of an hour or more, and while we were all considering whether or no we should return to the house, the figure of Annie Raeburn was seen coming down the brae towards the party, in a way very unlike her usual staid and quiet demeanour, and stopping at some distance, to beckon with her hand more particularly, it was thought, on ourselves, as we stood a few yards apart from the rest. "Willie is worse," were the only words she said, as we hastened back together; and on entering the room, we found the old man uncertainly pacing the floor by himself, but with a composed countenance. "He expressed a wish to see you—but he is gone!" We followed into Willie's small bedroom and study, and beheld him already *laid out*, and his mother sitting as calmly beside him as if she were watching his sleep. "Sab not sae sair, Lawrie—God was gracious to let him live to this day, that he might dee in his brither's arms."

The sun has mounted high in heaven, while thus we have been dreaming away the hours—a dozen miles at least have we slowly wandered over, since morning, along pleasant by-paths, where never dust lay, or from gate to gate of pathless enclosures, a trespasser fearless of those threatening nonentities, spring-guns. There is the turnpike-road—the great north and south road—for it is either the one or the other, according to the air towards which you choose to turn your face. Behold a little *WAYSIDE INN*, neatly thatched, and with white-washed front, and sign-board hanging from a tree, on which are painted the figures of two jolly gentlemen, one in kilts and the other in breeches, shaking hands cautiously across a running brook. The meal of all meals is a paulo-post-meridian breakfast. The rosiness of the combs of the strapping hens is good augury;—hark, a cackle from the barn—another egg is laid—and chanticleer, stretching himself up on claw-tip, and clapping his wings of the bonny beaten gold, crows aloud to his sultana till the welkin rings. "Turn to the left, sir, if you please," quoth a comely matron; and we find ourselves snugly seated in an arm-chair, not wearied, but to rest willing, while the clock ticks pleasantly, and we take no note of time but by its gain; for here is our journal, in which we shall put down a few jottings for *MAY-DAY*. Three boiled eggs—one to each penny-roll—are sufficient, under any circumstances, along with the same number fried with mutton-ham, for the breakfast of a Gentleman and a Tory. Nor do we remember—when tea-cups have been on a proper scale—ever to have wished to go beyond the Golden Rule of Three. In politics, we confess that we are rather ultra; but in all things else we love moderation. "Come in, my bonny little lassie—ye needna keep keekin' in that gate fra ahint the door"—and in a few minutes the curly-pated prattler is murmuring on our knee. The sonsie wife, well pleased with the sight, and knowing, from our kindness to children, that we are on the same side of politics with her gudeman—Ex-sergeant in the Black Watch.

and once Orderly to Garth himself—brings out her ain bottle from the spence—a hollow square, and green as emerald. Bless the gurgle of its honest mouth! With prim lips mine hostess kisses the glass, previously letting fall a not inelegant curtsy—for she had, we now learned, been a lady's maid in her youth to one who is indeed a lady, all the time her lover was abroad in the army, in Egypt, Ireland, and the West Indies, and Malta, and Guernsey, Sicily, Portugal, Holland, and, we think she said, Corfu. One of the children has been sent to the field, where her husband is sowing barley, to tell him that there is fear lest dinner cool; and the mistress now draws herself up in pride of his noble appearance, as the stately Highlander salutes us with the respectful but bold air of one who has seen some service at home and abroad. Never knew we a man make other than a good bow, who had partaken freely in a charge of bayonets.

Shenstone's lines about always meeting the warmest welcome in an inn, are very natural and tender—as most of his compositions are, when he was at all in earnest. For our own part, we cannot complain of ever meeting any other welcome than a warm one, go where we may; for we are not obtrusive, and where we are not either liked, or loved, or esteemed, or admired, (that last is a strong word, yet we all have our admirers,) we are exceeding chary of the light of our countenance. But at an inn, the only kind of welcome that is indispensable, is a civil one. When that is not forthcoming, we shake the dust, or the dirt, off our feet, and pursue our journey, well assured that a few milestones will bring us to a humaner roof. Incivility and surliness have occasionally given us opportunities of beholding rare celestial phenomena—meteors—falling and shooting stars—the Aurora Borealis, in her shifting splendours—haloes round the moon, variously bright as the rainbow—electrical arches forming themselves on the sky in a manner so wondrously beautiful, that we should be sorry to hear them accounted for by philosophers—one half of the horizon blue, and without a cloud, and the other driving tempestuously like the sea-foam, with waves mountain-high—and divinest show of all for a solitary night-wandering man, who has any thing of a soul at all, far and wide, and high up into the gracious heavens, Planets and Stars all burning as if their urns were newly fed with light, not twinkling as they do in a dewy or a vapoury night, although then, too, are the softened or veiled luminaries beautiful—but large, full, and free over the whole firmament—a galaxy of shining and unanswerable arguments in proof of the Immortality of the Soul.

The whole world is improving; nor can there be a pleasanter proof of that than this very wayside inn—yclept the SALUTATION. What a miserable pot-house it was long ago, with a rusty-hinged door, that would neither open nor shut—neither let you out nor in—immovable and intractable to foot or hand—or all at once, when you least expected it to yield, slamming to with a bang; a constant puddle in front during rainy weather, and heaped up dust in dry—roof partly thatched, partly slated, partly

tilled, and partly open to the elements, with its naked rafters. Broken windows repaired with an old petticoat, or a still older pair of breeches, and walls that had always been plastered and better plastered and worse plastered, in frosty weather—all labour in vain, as crumbling patches told, and variegated streaks, and stains of dismal ochre, meanest of all colours, and still symptomatic of want, mismanagement, bankruptcy, and perpetual fittings from a tenement that was never known to have paid any rent. Then what a pair of drunkards were old Saunders and his spouse! Yet never once were they seen drunk on a Sabbath, or a fast-day—regular kirk-goers, and attentive observers of ordinances. They had not very many children, yet, pass the door when you might, you were sure to hear a squall or a shriek, or the ban of the mother, or the smacking of the palm of the hand on the part of the enemy easiest of access; or you saw one of the ragged fiends pursued by a parent round the corner, and brought back by the hair of the head till its eyes were like those of a Chinese. Now, what decency—what neatness—what order—in this household—this private public! into which customers step like neighbours on a visit, and are served with a heartiness and good-will that deserve the name of hospitality, for they are gratuitous, and can only be repaid in kind. A limited prospect does that latticed-window command—and the small panes cut objects into too many parts—little more than the breadth of the turnpike road, and a hundred yards of the same, to the north and to the south, with a few budding hedgerows, half a dozen trees, and some green braes. Yet could we sit and moralize, and intellectualize, for hours at this window, nor hear the striking clock.

There trips by a blooming maiden of middle degree all alone—the more's the pity—yet perfectly happy in her own society, and one we venture to say who never received a love-letter, valentines excepted, in all her innocent days. A fat man sitting by himself in a gig! somewhat red in the face, as if he had dined early, and not so sure of the road as his horse, who has drunk nothing but a single pailful of water, and is anxious to get to town that he may be rubbed down, and see oats once more. Scamper away, ye joyous schoolboys, and, for your sake, may that cloud breathe forth rain and breeze, before you reach the burn, which you seem to fear may run dry before you can see the Pool where the two-pounders lie. Methinks we know that old woman, and of the first novel we write she shall be the heroine. Ha! a brilliant bevy of mounted maidens, in riding-habits, and Spanish hats, with “swaling feathers”—sisters, it is easy to see, and daughters of one whom we either loved, or thought we loved; but now they say she is fat and vulgar, is the devil's own scold, and makes her servants and her husband lead the lives of slaves. All that we can say is, that once on a time it was *tout une autre chose*; for a smaller foot, and a slimmer ankle, a more delicate waist, arms more lovely, reposing in their gracefulness beneath her bosom, tresses of brighter and more burnished auburn—such

starlike eyes, thrilling without seeking to reach the soul—But phoo! phoo! phoo! she married a jolted-headed squire with two thousand acres, and, in self-defence, has grown fat, vulgar, and a scold. There is a Head for a painter! and what perfect peace and placidity all over the Blind Man's countenance! He is not a beggar, although he lives on alms—those sightless orbs ask not for charity, nor yet those withered hands, as, staff-supported, he stops at the kind voice of the traveller, and tells his story in a few words. On the ancient Dervise moves, with his long silvery hair, journeying contentedly in darkness towards the eternal light. A gang of gipsies! with their numerous assery laden with horn-spoons, pots, and pans, and black-eyed children. We should not be surprised to read some day in the newspapers, that the villain who leads the van had been executed for burglary, arson, and murder. That is the misfortune of having a bad physiognomy, a sidelong look, a scarred cheek, and a cruel grin about the muscles of the mouth; to say nothing about rusty hair protruding through the holes of a brown hat, not made for the wearer—long, sinewy arms, all of one thickness, terminating in huge, hairy, horny hands, chiefly knuckles and nails—a shambling gait, notwithstanding that his legs are finely proportioned, as if the night prowler were cautious not to be heard by the sleeping house, nor to awaken—so noiseless his stealthy advances—the unchained mastiff in his kennel.

But, hark! the spirit-stirring music of fife and drum! A whole regiment of soldiers on their march to replace another whole regiment of soldiers—and that is as much as we can be expected to know about their movements. Food for the cannon's mouth; but the maw of war has been gorged and satiated, and the glittering soap-bubbles of reputation, blown by windy-cheeked Fame from the bowl of her pipe, have all burst as they have been clutched by the hands of tall fellows in red raiment, and with feathers on their heads, just before going to lie down on what is called the bed of honour. Melancholy indeed to think, that all these fine, fierce, ferocious, fire-eaters are doomed, but for some unlooked-for revolution in the affairs of Europe and the world, to die in their beds! Yet there is some comfort in thinking of the composition of a Company of brave defenders of their country. It is, we shall suppose, Seventy strong. Well, jot down three ploughmen, genuine clodhoppers, chawbacons *sans peur et sans reproche*, except that the overseers of the parish were upon them with orders of affiliation; and one shepherd, who made contradictory statements about the number of the spring lambs, and in whose house had been found during winter certain fleeces, for which no ingenuity could account; a laird's son, long known by the name of the Ne'er-doweel; a Man of tailors, forced to accept the bounty-money—during a protracted strike—not dungs they, but flints all the nine; a barber, like many a son of genius, ruined by his wit, and who, after being driven from pole to pole, found refuge in the army at last; a wanton, butcher, once a bully, and now a

poltroon; two of the Seven Young Men—all that now survive—impatient of the drudgery of the counting-house, and the injustice of the age—but they, we believe, are in the band—the triangle and the serpent; twelve cotton-spinners at the least; six weavers of woollens; a couple of colliers from the bowels of the earth; and a score of miscellaneous rabble—flunkies long out of place, and unable to live on their liveries—felons acquitted, or that have dreed their punishment—picked men from the shilling galleries of playhouses—and the élite of the refuse and sweepings of the jails. Look how all the rogues and reprobates march like one man! Alas! was it of such materials that our conquering army was made?—were such the heroes of Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo?

Why not, and what then? Heroes are but men after all. Men, as men go, are the materials of which heroes are made; and recruits in three years ripen into veterans. Cowardice in one campaign is disciplined into courage, fear into valour. In presence of the enemy, pickpockets become patriots—members of the swell mob volunteer on forlorn hopes, and step out from the ranks to head the storm! Lord bless you! have you not studied sympathy and *l'esprit de corps*? An army fifty thousand strong consists, we shall suppose, in equal portions of saints and sinners; and saints and sinners are all English, Irish, Scottish. What wonder, then, that they drive all resistance to the devil, and go on from victory to victory, keeping all the cathedrals and churches in England hard at work with all their organs, from Christmas to Christmas, blowing *Te Deum*? You must not be permitted too curiously to analyze the composition of the British army or the British navy. Look at them, think of them as Wholes, with Nelson or Wellington the head, and in one slump pray God to bless the defenders of the throne, the hearth, and the altar.

The baggage-wagons halt, and some refreshments are sent for to the women and children. Ay, creatures not far advanced in their teens are there—a year or two ago, at school or service, happy as the day was long, now mothers, with babies at their breasts—happy still perhaps; but that pretty face is woefully wan—that hair did not use to be so dishevelled—and bony, and clammy, and blue-veined is the hand that lay so white, and warm, and smooth, in the grasp of the seducer. Yet she thinks she is his wife; and, in truth, there is a ring on her marriage-finger. But, should the regiment embark, so many women, and no more, are suffered to go with a company; and, should one of the lots not fall on her, she may take of her husband an everlasting farewell.

The Highflier Coach! carrying six in, and twelve outsiders—driver and guard excluded—rate of motion eleven miles an hour, with stoppages. Why, in the name of Heaven, are all people now-a-days in such haste and hurry? Is it absolutely necessary that one and all of this dozen and a half Protestants and Catholics—alike anxious for emancipation—should be at a particular place, at one particular moment of time out of the twenty-four hours given to

man for motion and for rest! Confident are we that that obese elderly gentleman beside the coachman—whose ample rotundity is encased in that antique and almost obsolete invention, a spenser—needed not to have been so carried in a whirlwind to his comfortable home. Scarcely is there time for pity as we behold an honest man's wife, pale as putty in the face at a tremendous swing, or lounge, or lurch of the Highflier, holding like grim death to the balustrades. But umbrellas, parasols, plaids, shawls, bonnets, and great-coats with as many necks as Hydra—the Pile of Life has disappeared in a cloud of dust, and the faint bugle tells that already it has spun and reeled onwards a mile on its destination.

But here comes a vehicle at more rational pace. Mercy on us—a hearse and six horses returning leisurely from a funeral! Not improbable that the person who has just quitted it, had never, till he was a corpse, got higher than a single-horse Chay—yet no fewer than half-a-dozen hackneys must be hired for his dust. But clear the way! “Hurra! hurra!” he rides a race, ‘tis for a thousand pound!” Another, and another, and another—all working away with legs and knees, arms and shoulders, on cart-horses in the Brooze—the Brooze! The hearse-horses take no sort of notice of the cavalry of cart and plough, but each in turn keeps its snorting nostrils deep plunged in the pail of meal and water—for well may they be thirsty—the kirkyard being far among the hills, and the roads not yet civilized. “May I ask, friend,” addressing ourself to the hearseman, “whom you have had inside?” “Only Dr. Sandilands, sir—if you are going my way, you may have a lift for a dram!” We had always thought there was a superstition in Scotland against marrying in the month of May; but it appears that people are wedded and bedded in that month too—some in warm sheets—and some in cold—cold—dripping damp as the grave.

But we must up, and off. Not many gentlemen's houses in the parish—that is to say, old family seats; for of modern villas, or boxes, inhabited by persons imagining themselves gentlemen, and, for any thing we know to the contrary, not wholly deceived in that belief, there is rather too great an abundance. Four family seats, however, there certainly are, of sufficient antiquity to please a lover of the olden time; and of those four, the one which we used to love best to look at was—THE MAINS. No need to describe it in many words. A Hall on a river side, embosomed in woods—holms and meadows winding away in front, with their low thick hedgerows and stately single trees—on—on—on—as far as the eye can reach, a crowd of grove-tops—elms chiefly, or beeches—and a beautiful boundary of blue hills. “Good-day, Sergeant Stewart! farewell, Ma’am—farewell!” And in half an hour we are sitting in the moss-house at the edge of the outer garden, and gazing up at the many windowed gray walls of the MAINS, and its high steep-ridged roof, discoloured by the weather-stains of centuries. “The taxes on such a house,” quod Sergeant Stewart, “are of themselves enough to ruin a man of moderate for-

tune—so the Mains, sir, has been uninhabited for a good many years.” But he had been speaking to one who knew far more about the Mains than he could do—and who was not sorry that the Old Place was allowed to stand, undisturbed by any rich upstart, in the venerable silence of its own decay. And this is the moss-house that we helped to build with our own hands—at least to hang the lichen tapestry, and stud the cornice with shells! We were one of the paviors of that pebbled floor—and that bright scintillating piece of spar, the centre of the circle, came all the way from Derbyshire in the knapsack of a geologist, who died a Professor. It is strange the roof has not fallen in long ago; but what a slight ligature will often hold together a heap of ruins from tumbling into nothing! The old moss-house, though somewhat decrepit, is alive; and, if these swallows don't take care, they will be stunning themselves against our face, jerking out and in, through door and window, twenty times in a minute. Yet with all that twittering of swallows—and with all that frequent crowing of a cock—and all that cawing of rooks—and cooing of doves—and lowing of cattle along the holms—and bleating of lambs along the braes—it is nevertheless a pensive place; and here sit we like a hermit, world-sick, and to be revived only by hearing in the solitude to the voices of other years.

What more mournful thought than that of a Decayed Family—a high-born race gradually worn out, and finally ceasing to be! The remote ancestors of this House were famous men of war—then some no less famous statesmen—then poets and historians—then minds still of fine, but of less energetic mould—and last of all, the mystery of madness breaking suddenly forth from spirits that seemed to have been especially formed for profoundest peace. There were three sons and two daughters, undegenerate from the ancient stateliness of the race—the oldest on his approach to manhood erect as the young cedar, that seems conscious of being destined one day to be the tallest tree in the woods. The twin-sisters were ladies indeed! Lovely as often are the low-born, no maiden ever stepped from her native cottage-door, even in a poet's dream, with such an air as that with which those fair beings walked along their saloons and lawns. Their beauty no one could at all describe—and no one beheld it who did not say that it transcended all that imagination had been able to picture of angelic and divine. As the sisters were, so were the brothers—distinguished above all their mates conspicuously, and beyond all possibility of mistake; so that strangers could single them out at once as the heirs of beauty, that, according to veritable pictures and true traditions, had been an unalienable gift from nature to that family ever since it bore the name. For the last three generations none of that house had ever reached even the meridian of life—and those of whom we now speak had from childhood been orphans. Yet how joyous and free were they one and all, and how often from this cell did evening hear their holy harmonies, as the Five united together

with voice, harp, and dulcimer, till the stars themselves rejoiced!—One morning, Louisa, who loved the dewy dawn, was met bewildered in her mind, and perfectly astray—with no symptom of having been suddenly alarmed or terrified—but with an unrecognising smile, and eyes scarcely changed in their expression, although they knew not—but rarely—on whom they looked. It was but a few months till she died—and Adelaide was laughing carelessly on her sister's funeral day—and asked why mourning should be worn at a marriage, and a plumed hearse sent to take away the bride. Fairest of God's creatures! can it be that thou art still alive? Not with cherubs smiling round thy knees—not walking in the free realms of earth and heaven with thy husband—the noble youth, who loved thee from thy childhood when himself a child; but oh! that such misery can be beneath the sun—shut up in some narrow cell perhaps—no one knows where—whether in this thy native kingdom, or in some foreign land—with those hands manacled—a demon-light in eyes once most angelical—and ringing through undistinguishable days and nights imaginary shriekings and yellings in thy poor distracted brain!—Down went the ship with all her crew in which Percy sailed;—the sabre must have been in the hand of a skilful swordsman that in one of the Spanish battles hewed Sholto down; and the gentle Richard, whose soul—while he possessed it clearly—was for ever among the

sacred books, although too long he was as a star vainly sought for in a cloudy region, yet did for a short time starlike reappear—and on his death-bed he knew us, and the other mortal creatures weeping beside him, and that there was One who died to save sinners.

Let us away—let us away from this overpowering place—and make our escape from such unendurable sadness. Is this fit celebration of merry May-day? Is this the spirit in which we ought to look over the bosom of the earth, all teeming with buds and flowers just as man's heart should be teeming—and why not ours—with hopes and joys? Yet beautiful as this May-day is—and all the country round which it so tenderly illumines, we came not hither, a solitary pilgrim from our distant home, to indulge ourself in a joyful happiness. No, hither came we purposely to mourn among the scenes which in boyhood we seldom beheld through tears. And therefore have we chosen the gayest day of all the year, when all life is rejoicing, from the grasshopper among our feet to the lark in the cloud. Melancholy, and not mirth, doth he hope to find, who after a life of wandering—and maybe not without sorrow—comes back to gaze on the banks and braes whereon, to his eyes, once grew the flowers of Paradise. Flowers of Paradise are ye still—for, praise be to Heaven! the sense of beauty is still strong within us—and methinks we could feel the beauty of this scene though our heart were broken.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER I.

WE have often exposed the narrowness and weakness of that dogma, so pertinaciously adhered to by persons of cold hearts and limited understandings, that Religion is not a fit theme for poetical genius, and that Sacred Poetry is beyond the powers of uninspired man. We do not know that the grounds on which that dogma stands have ever been formally stated by any writer but Samuel Johnson; and therefore with all respect, nay, veneration, for his memory, we shall now shortly examine his statement, which, though, as we think, altogether-unsatisfactory and sophistical, is yet a splendid specimen of false reasoning, and therefore worthy of being exposed and overthrown. Dr. Johnson was not often utterly wrong in his mature and considerate judgments respecting any subject of paramount importance to the virtue and happiness of mankind. He was a good and wise being; but sometimes he did grievously err; and never more so than in his vain endeavour to exclude from the province of poetry its noblest, highest, and holiest domain. Shut the gates of heaven against Poetry, and her flights along this earth will be feeble and lower—her wings clogged and heavy by the attraction of matter and her voice—like that of the caged lark,

so different from its hymning when lost to sight in the sky—will fail to call forth the deepest responses from the sanctuary of our spirit.

“Let no pious ear be offended,” says Johnson, “if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of spring and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide and the revolutions of the sky, and praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God. Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

“The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from

novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression. Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful in the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those that repel, the imagination; but religion must be shown as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already. From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and the elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

"The employments of pious meditation are *faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication*. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, though the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

"Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that pious verse can do is to help the memory and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere."

Here Dr. Johnson confesses that sacred subjects are not unfit—that they are fit—for didactic and descriptive poetry. Now, this is a very wide and comprehensive admission; and being a right, and natural, and just admission, it cannot but strike the thoughtful reader at once as destructive of the great dogma by which Sacred Poetry is condemned. The doctrines of Religion may be defended, he allows, in a didactic poem—and, pray, how can they be defended unless they are also expounded? And how can they be expounded without being steeped, as it were, in religious feeling? Let such a poem be as didactic as can possibly be imagined, still it must be pervaded by the very spirit of religion—and that spirit, breathing throughout the whole, must also be frequently expressed, vividly, and passionately, and profoundly, in particular passages; and if so, must it not be, in the strictest sense, a Sacred poem?

"But," says Dr. Johnson, "the subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety." Why introduce the word "disputation," as if it characterized justly and entirely

all didactic poetry? And who ever heard of an essential distinction between piety, and motives to piety? Mr. James Montgomery, in a very excellent Essay prefixed to that most interesting collection, "*The Christian Poet*," well observes, that "motives to piety must be of the *nature* of piety, otherwise they could never incite to it—the precepts and sanctions of the Gospel might as well be denied to be any part of the Gospel." And for our own parts, we scarcely know what piety is, separated from its motives—or how, so separated, it could be expressed in words at all.

With regard, again, to descriptive poetry, the argument, if argument it may be called, is still more lame and impotent. "A poet," it is said, "may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of the spring and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide and the revolutions of the sky, and praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside." Most true he may; but then we are told, "the subject of the description is not God, but the works of God!" Alas! what trifling—what miserable trifling is this! In the works of God, God is felt to be by us his creatures, whom he has spiritually endowed. We cannot look on them, even in our least elevated moods, without some shadow of love or awe; in our most elevated moods, we gaze on them with religion. By the very constitution of our intelligence, the effects speak of the cause. We are led by nature up to nature's God. The Bible is not the only revelation—there is another—dimmer but not less divine—for surely the works are as the words of God. No great poet, in describing the glories and beauties of the external world, is forgetful of the existence and attributes of the Most High. That thought, and that feeling, animate all his strains; and though he dare not to describe Him the Ineffable, he cannot prevent his poetry from being beautifully coloured by devotion, tinged by piety—in its essence it is religious.

It appears, then, that the qualifications or restrictions with which Dr. Johnson is willing to allow that there may be didactic and descriptive sacred poetry, are wholly unmeaning, and made to depend on distinctions which have no existence.

Of narrative poetry of a sacred kind, Mr. Montgomery well remarks, Johnson makes no mention, except it be implicated with the statement, that "the ideas of Christian Theology are too sacred for fiction—a sentiment more just than the admirers of Milton and Klopstock are willing to admit, without almost plenary indulgence in favour of these great, but not infallible authorities." Here Mr. Montgomery expresses himself very cautiously—perhaps rather too much so—for he leaves us in the dark about his own belief. But this we do not hesitate to say, that though there is great danger of wrong being done to the ideas of Christian theology by poetry—a wrong which must be most painful to the whole inner being of a Christian; yet that there seems no necessity of such a wrong, and that a great poet, guarded by awe, and fear, and love, may move his wings unblamed, and to the glory of God, even amongst the most awful sanctities of his

faith. These sanctities may be too awful for "fiction"—but fiction is not the word here, any more than disputation was the word there. Substitute for it the word poetry; and then, reflecting on that of Isaiah and of David, conversant with the Holy of Holies, we feel that it need not profane those other sanctities, if it be, like its subject, indeed divine. True, that those bards were inspired—with them

— the name
Of prophet and of poet was the same ;

but still, the power in the soul of a great poet, not in that highest of senses inspired, is, we may say it, of the same kind—inferior but in degree; for religion itself is always an inspiration. It is felt to be so in the prose of holy men—Why not in their poetry?

If these views be just, and we have expressed them "boldly, yet humbly"—all that remains to be set aside of Dr. Johnson's argument is, "that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and man, cannot be poetical. Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer."

There is something very fine and true in the sentiment here; but the sentiment is only true in some cases, not in all. There are different degrees in the pious moods of the most pious spirit that ever sought communion with its God and its Saviour. Some of these are awe-struck and speechless. That line,

"Come, then, expressive silence, muse his praise!"

denies the power of poetry to be adequate to adoration, while the line itself is most glorious poetry. The temper even of our fallen spirits may be too divine for any words. Then the creature kneels mute before its Maker. But are there not other states of mind in which we feel ourselves drawn near to God, when there is no such awful speechlessness laid upon us—but when, on the contrary, our tongues are loosened, and the heart that burns within will speak? Will speak, perhaps, in song—in the inspiration of our piety breathing forth hymns and psalms—poetry indeed—if there be poetry on this earth? Why may we not say that the spirits of just men made perfect—almost perfect, by such visitations from heaven—will break forth—"rapt, inspired," into poetry, which may be called holy, sacred, divine?

We feel as if treading on forbidden ground—and therefore speak reverently; but still we do not fear to say, that between that highest state of contemplative piety which must be mute, down to that lowest state of the same feeling which evanishes and blends into mere human emotion as between creature and creature, there are infinite degrees of emotion which may be all embodied, without offence, in words—and if so embodied, with sincerity and humility, will be poetry, and poetry too of the most beautiful and affecting kind.

"Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer." Most true, indeed. But, though poetry did not confer that higher state, poetry may nevertheless, in some measure and to

some degree, breathe audibly some of the emotions which constitutes its blessedness; poetry may even help the soul to ascend to those celestial heights; because poetry may prepare it, and dispose it to expand itself, and open itself out to the highest and holiest influences of religion; for poetry there may be inspired directly from the word of God, using the language and strong in the spirit of that word—unexistent but for the Old and New Testament.

We agree with Mr. Montgomery, that the sum of Dr. Johnson's argument amounts to this—that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, *cannot be poetical*. But here we at once ask ourselves, what does he mean by poetical? "The essence of poetry," he says, "is invention—such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights." Here, again, there is confusion and sophistry. There is much high and noble poetry of which invention, such invention as is here spoken of, is not the essence. Devotional poetry is of that character. Who would require something unexpected and surprising in a strain of thanksgiving, repentance, or supplication? Such feelings as these, if rightly expressed, may exalt or prostrate the soul, without much—without any aid from the imagination—except in as far as the imagination will work under the power of every great emotion that does not absolutely confound mortal beings, and humble them down even below the very dust. There may be "no grace from novelty of sentiment," and "very little from novelty of expression"—to use Dr. Johnson's words—for it is neither grace nor novelty that the spirit of the poet is seeking—"the strain we hear is of a higher mood;" and "few as the topics of devotion may be," (but are they few?) and "universally known," they are all commensurate—nay, far more than commensurate with the whole power of the soul—never can they become unaffected while it is our lot to die; even from the lips of ordinary men, the words that flow on such topics flow effectually, if they are earnest, simple, and sincere; but from the lips of genius, inspired by religion, who shall dare to say that, on such topics, words have not flowed that are felt to be poetry almost worthy of the Celestial Ardours around the throne, and by their majesty to "link us to the radiant angels," than whom we were made but a little lower, and with whom we may, when time shall be no more, be equalled in heaven?

We do not hesitate to say, that Dr. Johnson's doctrine of the *effect* of poetry is wholly false. If it do indeed please, by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford, that is only because the things themselves are imperfect—more so than suits the aspirations of a spirit, always aspiring because immortal, to a higher sphere—a higher order of being. But when God himself is, with all awe and reverence, made the subject of song—then it is the office—the sacred office of poetry—not to exalt the subject, but to exalt the soul that contemplates it. That poetry can do, else why does human nature glory in the "Paradise Lost?"

"Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted—Infinity cannot be amplified—Perfection cannot be improved." Should not this go to prohibit all speech—all discourse—all sermons concerning the divine attributes? Immersed as they are in matter, our souls wax dull, and the attributes of the Deity are but as mere names. Those attributes cannot, indeed, be exalted by poetry. "The perfection of God cannot be improved"—nor was it worthy of so wise a man so to speak; but while the Creator abideth in his own incomprehensible Being, the creature, too willing to crawl blind and hoodwinked along the earth, like a worm, may be raised by the voice of the charmer, "some sweet singer of Israel," from his slimy track, and suddenly be made to soar on wings up into the ether.

Would Dr. Johnson have declared the uselessness of Natural Theology? On the same ground he must have done so, to preserve consistency in his doctrine. Do we, by exploring wisdom, and power, and goodness, in all animate and inanimate creation, exalt Omnipotence, amplify infinity, or improve perfection? We become ourselves exalted by such divine contemplations—by knowing the structure of a rose-leaf or of an insect's wing. We are reminded of what, alas! we too often forget, and exclaim, "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name!" And while science explores, may not poetry celebrate the glories and the mercies of our God?

The argument against which we contend gets weaker and weaker as it proceeds—the gross misconception of the nature of poetry on which it is founded becomes more and more glaring—the paradoxes, dealt out as confidently as if they were self-evident truths, more and more repulsive alike to our feelings and our understandings. "The employments of pious meditation are faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, though the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being superior to us, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication to men may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." What a vain attempt authoritatively to impose upon the common sense of mankind! Faith is not invariably uniform. To preserve it unwavering—unquaking—to save it from lingering or from sudden death—is the most difficult service to which the frail spirit—frail even in its greatest strength—is called every day—every hour—of this troubled, perplexing, agitating, and often most unintelligible life! "Liberty of will," says Jeremy Taylor, "is like the motion of a magnetic needle towards the north, full of trembling and uncertainty till it be fixed in the beloved point: it wavers as long as it is free, and is at rest when it can choose no more. It is humility and truth to allow to man this liberty; and, therefore, for this we may lay our faces in the dust, and confess that our dignity

and excellence suppose misery, and are imperfect, but the instrument and capacity of all duty and all virtue." Happy he whose faith is finally "fixed in the beloved point!" But even of that faith, what hinders the poet whom it has blessed to sing! While, of its tremblings, and veerings, and variations, why may not the poet, whose faith has experienced, and still may experience them all, breathe many a melancholy and mournful lay, assuaged, ere the close, by the descent of peace?

Thanksgiving, it is here admitted, is the "most joyful of all holy effusions;" and the admission is sufficient to prove that it cannot be "confined to a few modes." "Out of the fulness of the heart the tongue speaketh;" and though at times the heart will be too full for speech, yet as often even the coldest lips prove eloquent in gratitude—yea, the very dumb do speak—nor, in excess of joy, know the miracle that has been wrought upon them by the power of their own mysterious and high enthusiasm.

That "repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, should not be at leisure for cadences and epithets," is in one respect true; but nobody supposes that during such moments—or hours—poetry is composed; and surely when they have passed away, which they must do, and the mind is left free to meditate upon them, and to recall them as shadows of the past, there is nothing to prevent them from being steadily and calmly contemplated, and depicted in somewhat softened and altogether endurable light, so as to become proper subjects even of poetry—that is, proper subjects of such expression as human nature is prompted to clothe with all its emotions, as soon as they have subsided, after a swell or a storm, into a calm, either placid altogether, or still bearing traces of the agitation that has ceased, and have left the whole being self-possessed, and both capable and desirous of indulging itself in an after-emotion at once melancholy and sublime. Then, repentance will not only be "at leisure for cadences and epithets," but cadences and epithets will of themselves move harmonious numbers, and give birth, if genius as well as piety be there, to religious poetry. Cadences and epithets are indeed often sought for with care, and pains, and ingenuity; but they often come forth unsought; and never more certainly and more easily than when the mind recovers itself from some oppressive mood, and, along with a certain sublime sadness, is restored to the full possession of powers that had for a short severe season been overwhelmed, but afterwards look back, in very inspiration, on the feelings that during their height were nearly unendurable, and then unfit for any outward and palpable form. The criminal trembling at the bar of an earthly tribunal, and with remorse and repentance receiving his doom, might, in like manner, be wholly unable to set his emotions to the measures of speech; but when recovered from the shock by pardon, or reprieve, or submission, is there any reason why he should not calmly recall the miseries and the prostration of spirit attendant on that hour, and give them touching and pathetic expression?

"Supplication to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." And in that cry we say that there may be poetry; for the God of Mercy suffers his creatures to approach his throne in supplication, with words which they have learned when supplicating one another; and the feeling of being forgiven, which we are graciously permitted to believe may follow supplication, and spring from it, may vent itself in many various and most affecting forms of speech. Men will supplicate God in many other words besides those of doubt and of despair; hope will mingle with prayer; and hope, as it glows, and burns, and expands, will speak in poetry—else poetry there is none proceeding from any of our most sacred passions.

Dr. Johnson says, "Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself." Here he had in his mind the most false notions of poetry, which he had evidently imagined to be an art despising simplicity—whereas simplicity is its very soul. Simple expression, he truly says, is in religion most sublime—and why should not poetry be simple in its expression? Is it not always so—when the mood of mind it expresses is simple, concise, and strong, and collected into one great emotion? But he uses—as we see—the terms "lustre" and "decoration"—as if poetry necessarily, by its very nature, was always ambitious and ornate; whereas we all know, that it is often in all its glory direct and simple as the language of very childhood, and for that reason sublime.

With such false notions of poetry, it is not to be wondered at that Dr. Johnson, enlightened man as he was, should have concluded his argument with this absurdity—"The ideas of Christian theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere." No. Simple as they are—on them have been bestowed, and by them awakened, the highest strains of eloquence—and here we hail the shade of Jeremy Taylor alone—one of the highest that ever soared from earth to heaven; sacred as they are, they have not been desecrated by the fictions—so to call them—of John Milton; majestic as are the heavens, their majesty has not been lowered by the ornaments that the rich genius of the old English divines has so profusely hung around them, like dewdrops glistening on the fruitage of the Tree of Life. Tropes and figures are nowhere more numerous and refulgent than in the Scriptures themselves, from Isaiah to St. John; and, magnificent as are the "sidereal heavens" when the eye looks aloft, they are not to our eyes less so, nor less lovely, when reflected in the bosom of a still lake or the slumbering ocean.

This statement of facts destroys at once all Dr. Johnson's splendid sophistry—splendid at first sight—but on closer inspection a mere haze, mist, or smoke, illuminated by an artifi-

cial lustre. How far more truly, and how far more sublimely, does Milton, "that mighty orb of song," speak of his own divine gift—the gift of Poetry! "These abilities are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, and are of power to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbation of the mind, and set the affections to a right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's Almightyness, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of Martyrs and Saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapse of kingdoms and states from virtue and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, and in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion, or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and reflexions of men's thoughts from within; all these things, with a solid and treatable smoothness, to paint out and describe—Teaching over the whole book of morality and virtue, through all instances of example, with such delight to those, especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon Truth herself unless they see her elegantly dressed; that, whereas the paths of honesty and good life that appear now rugged and difficult, appear to all men easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed."

It is not easy to believe that no great broad lights have been thrown on the mysteries of men's minds since the days of the great poets, moralists, and metaphysicians of the ancient world. We seem to feel more profoundly than they—to see, as it were, into a new world. The things of that world are of such surpassing worth, that in certain awe-struck moods we regard them as almost above the province of Poetry. Since the revelation of Christianity, all moral thought has been sanctified by Religion. Religion has given it a purity, a solemnity, a sublimity, which, even among the noblest of the heathen, we shall look for in vain. The knowledge that shone but by fits and dimly on the eyes of Socrates and Plato, "that rolled in vain to find the light," has descended over many lands into "the huts where poor men lie"—and thoughts are familiar there, beneath the low and smoky roofs, higher far than ever flowed from the lips of Grecian sage meditating among the magnificence of his pillared temples. The whole condition and character of the Human Being, in Christian countries, has been raised up to a loftier elevation; and he may be looked at in the face without a sense of degradation, even when he wears the aspect of poverty and distress. Since that Religion was given us, and not before, has been felt the meaning of that sublime expression—The Brotherhood of Man.

Yet it is just as true, that there is as much misery and suffering in Christendom—nay, far more of them all—than troubled and tore men's hearts during the reign of all those superstitions and idolatries. But with what dif-

ferent feelings is it all thought of—spoken of—looked at—alleviated—repented—expiated—atoned for—now? In the olden time, such was the prostration of the “million,” that it was only when seen in high places that even Guilt and Sin were felt to be appalling;—Remorse was the privilege of Kings and Princes—and the Furies shook their scourges but before the eyes of the high-born, whose crimes had brought eclipse across the ancestral glories of some ancient line.

But we now know that there is but one origin from which flow all disastrous issues, alike to the king and the beggar. It is sin that does “with the lofty equalize the low;” and the same deep-felt community of guilt and groans which renders Religion awful, has given to poetry in a lower degree something of the same character—has made it far more profoundly tender, more overpoweringly pathetic, more humane and thoughtful far, more humble as well as more high, like Christian Charity more comprehensive; nay, we may say, like Christian Faith, felt by those to whom it is given to be from on high; and if not utterly destroyed, darkened and miserably weakened by a wicked or vicious life.

We may affirm, then, that as human nature has been so greatly purified and elevated by the Christian Religion, Poetry, which deals with human nature in all its dearest and most intimate concerns, must have partaken of that purity and that elevation—and that it may now be a far holier and more sacred inspiration, than when it was fabled to be the gift of Apollo and the Muses. We may not circumscribe its sphere. To what cerulean heights shall not the wing of Poetry soar? Into what dungeon-gloom shall she not descend? If such be her powers and privileges, shall she not be the servant and minister of Religion?

If from moral fictions of life Religion be altogether excluded, then it would indeed be a waste of words to show that they must be worse than worthless. They must be, not imperfect merely, but false, and not false merely, but calumnious against human nature. The agonies of passion fling men down to the dust on their knees, or smite them motionless as stone statues, sitting alone in their darkened chambers of despair. But sooner or later, all eyes, all hearts look for comfort to God. The coldest metaphysical analyst could not avoid *that*, in his sage enumeration of “each particular hair” that is twisted and untwisted by him into a sort of moral tie; and surely the impassioned and philosophical poet will not, dare not, for the spirit that is within him, exclude *that* from his elegies, his hymns, and his songs, which, whether mournful or exulting, are inspired by the life-long, life-deep conviction, that all the greatness of the present is but for the future—that the praises of this passing earth are worthy of his lyre, only because it is overshadowed by the eternal heavens.

But though the total exclusion of Religion from Poetry aspiring to be a picture of the life or soul of man, be manifestly destructive of its very essence—how, it may be asked, shall we set bounds to this spirit—how shall we limit it—measure it—and accustom it to the

curb of critical control? If Religion be indeed all-in-all, and there are few who openly deny it, must we, nevertheless, deal with it only in illusion—hint it as if we were half afraid of its spirit, half ashamed—and cunningly contrive to save our credit as Christians, without subjecting ourselves to the condemnation of critics, whose scorn, even in this enlightened age, has—the more is the pity—even by men conscious of their genius and virtue, been feared as more fatal than death?

No: let there be no compromise between false taste and true Religion. Better to be condemned by all the periodical publications in Great Britain than your own conscience. Let the dunce, with diseased spleen, who edits one obscure Review, revile and rail at you to his heart’s discontent, in hollow league with his black-billed brother, who, sickened by your success, has long laboured in vain to edit another, still more unpublishable—but do you hold the even tenor of your way, assured that the beauty which nature, and the Lord of nature, have revealed to your eyes and your heart, when sown abroad will not be suffered to perish, but will have everlasting life. Your books—humble and unpretending though they be—yet here and there a page, not uninspired by the spirit of Truth, and Faith, and Hope, and Charity—that is, by Religion—will be held up before the inglorious light, close to the eyes of the pious patriarch, sitting with his children’s children round his knees—nor will any one sentiment, chastened by that fire that tempers the sacred links that bind together the brotherhood of man, escape the solemn search of a soul, simple and strong in its Bible-taught wisdom, and happy to feel and own communion of holy thought with one unknown—even perhaps by name—who although dead yet speaketh—and, without superstition, is numbered among the saints of that lowly household.

He who knows that he writes in the fear of God and in the love of man, will not arrest the thoughts that flow from his pen, because he knows that they may—will be—insulted and profaned by the name of cant, and he himself held up as a hypocrite. In some hands, ridicule is indeed a terrible weapon. It is terrible in the hands of indignant genius, branding the audacious forehead of falsehood or pollution. But ridicule in the hands either of cold-blooded or infuriated Malice, is harmless as a birch-rod in the palsied fingers of a superannuated beldam, who in her blear-eyed dotage has lost her school. The Bird of Paradise might float in the sunshine unharmed all its beautiful life long, although all the sportsmen of Cockaigne were to keep firing at the star-like plumage during the Christmas holidays of a thousand years.

We never are disposed not to enjoy a religious spirit in metrical composition, but when induced to suspect that it is not sincere; and then we turn away from the hypocrite, just as we do from a pious pretender in the intercourse of life. Shocking it is indeed, to see “fools rush in where angels fear to tread;” nor have we words to express our disgust and horror at the sight of fools, not rushing in among those

awful sanctities before which angels veil their faces with their wings, but mincing in, with red slippers and flowered dressing-gowns—would-be fashionables, with crow-quills in hands like those of milliners, and rings on their fingers—afterwards extending their notes into Sacred Poems for the use of the public—penny-a-liners, reporting the judgments of Providence as they would the proceedings in a police court.

CHAPTER II.

THE distinctive character of poetry, it has been said, and credited almost universally, is *to please*. That they who have studied the laws of thought and passion should have suffered themselves to be deluded by an unmeaning word is mortifying enough; but it is more than mortifying—it perplexes and confounds—to think that poets themselves, and poets too of the highest order, have declared the same degrading belief of what is the scope and tendency, the end and aim of their own divine art—*forsooth, to please!* Pleasure is no more the end of poetry than it is the end of knowledge, or of virtue, or of religion, or of this world. The end of poetry is pleasure, delight, instruction, expansion, elevation, honour, glory, happiness here and hereafter, or it is nothing. Is the end of Paradise Lost to please? Is the end of Dante's Divine Comedy to please? Is the end of the Psalms of David to please? Or of the songs of Isaiah? Yet it is probable that poetry has often been injured or vitiated by having been written in the spirit of this creed. It relieved poets from the burden of their duty—from the responsibility of their endowments—from the conscience that is in genius. We suspect that this doctrine has borne especially hard on all sacred poetry, disinclined poets to devoting their genius to it—and consigned, if not to oblivion, to neglect, much of what is great in that magnificent walk. For if the masters of the Holy Harp are to strike it but to please—if their high inspirations are to be deadened and dragged down by the prevalent power of such a mean and unworthy aim—they will either be contented to awaken a few touching tones of "those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide"—unwilling to prolong and deepen them into the diapason of praise—or they will deposit their lyre within the gloom of the sanctuary, and leave unawakened "the soul of music sleeping on its strings."

All arguments, or rather objections to sacred poetry, dissolve as you internally look at them, like unabiding mist-shapes, or rather like imagined mirage where no mirage is, but the mind itself makes ocular deceptions for its own amusement. By sacred poetry, is mostly meant Scriptural; but there are, and always have been conceited and callous critics, who would exclude all religious feelings from poetry, and indeed from prose too, compendiously calling them all cant. Had such critics been right, all great nations would not have so gloried in their great bards. Poetry, it is clear, embraces all we can experience; and every high, impassioned, imaginative, intellectual, and moral state of being becomes religious

before it passes away, provided it be left free to seek the empyrean, and not adstricted to the glebe by some severe slavery of condition, which destroys the desire of ascent by the same inexorable laws that palsy the power, and reconcile the toilers to the doom of the dust. If all the states of being that poetry illustrates do thus tend, of their own accord, towards religious elevation, all high poetry must be religious; and so it is, for its whole language is breathing of a life "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth;" and the feelings, impulses, motives, aspirations, obligations, duties, privileges, which it shadows forth or imbodifies, enveloping them in solemn shade or attractive light, are all, directly or indirectly, manifestly or secretly, allied with the sense of the immortality of the soul, and the belief of a future state of reward and retribution. Extinguish that sense and that belief in a poet's soul, and he may hang up his harp.

Among the great living poets Wordsworth is the one whose poetry is to us the most inexplicable—with all our reverence for his transcendent genius, we do not fear to say the most open to the most serious charges—on the score of its religion. From the first line of the Lyrical Ballads to the last of the "Excursion"—it is avowedly one system of thought and feeling, embracing his experiences of human life, and his meditations on the moral government of this world. The human heart—the human mind—the human soul—to use his own fine words—is "the haunt and main region of his song." There are few, perhaps none of our affections—using that term in its largest sense—which have not been either slightly touched upon, or fully treated, by Wordsworth. In his poetry, therefore, we behold an image of what, to his eye, appears to be human life. Is there, or is there not, some great and lamentable defect in that image, marring both the truth and beauty of the representation? We think there is—and that it lies in his Religion.

In none of Wordsworth's poetry, previous to his "Excursion," is there any allusion made, except of the most trivial and transient kind, to Revealed Religion. He certainly cannot be called a Christian poet. The hopes that lie beyond the grave—and the many holy and awful feelings in which on earth these hopes are enshrined and fed, are rarely if ever part of the character of any of the persons—male or female—old or young—brought before us in his beautiful Pastorals. Yet all the most interesting and affecting ongoing of this life are exquisitely delineated—and innumerable of course are the occasions on which, had the thoughts and feelings of revealed religion been in Wordsworth's heart during the hours of inspiration—and he often has written like a man inspired—they must have found expression in his strains; and the personages, humble or high, that figure in his representations, would have been, in their joys or their sorrows, their temptations and their trials, Christians. But most assuredly this is not the case; the religion of this great Poet—in all his poetry published previous to the "Excursion"—is but the "Religion of the Woods."

In the "Excursion," his religion is brought forward—prominently and conspicuously—in many elaborate dialogues between Priest, Pedlar, Poet, and Solitary. And a very high religion it often is; but is it Christianity? No—it is not. There are glimpses given of some of the Christian doctrines; just as if the various philosophical disquisitions, in which the Poem abounds, would be imperfect without some allusion to the Christian creed. The interlocutors—eloquent as they all are—say but little on that theme; nor do they show—if we except the Priest—much interest in it—any solicitude; they may all, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be deists.

Now, perhaps, it may be said that Wordsworth was deterred from entering on such a theme by the awe of his spirit. But there is no appearance of this having been the case in any one single passage in the whole poem. Nor could it have been the case with such a man—a man privileged, by the power God has bestowed upon him, to speak unto all the nations of the earth, on all themes, however high and holy, which the children of men can feel and understand. Christianity, during almost all their disquisitions, lay in the way of all the speakers, as they kept journeying among the hills.

"On man, on nature, and on human life,
Musing in Solitude!"

But they, one and all, either did not perceive it, or, perceiving it, looked upon it with a cold and indifferent regard, and passed by into the poetry breathing from the dewy woods, or lowering from the cloudy skies. Their talk is of "Palmyra central, in the desert," rather than of Jerusalem. On the mythology of the Hea—then much beautiful poetry is bestowed, but none on the theology of the Christian.

Yet there is no subject too high for Wordsworth's muse. In the preface to the "Excursion," he says daringly—we fear too daringly,—

"Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater muse, if such
Descend to earth, or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil,
All strength—all terror—single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form,
Jehovah with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones;
I pass them unalarm'd!"

Has the poet, who believes himself entitled to speak thus of the power and province given to him to put forth and to possess, spoken in consonance with such a strain, by avoiding, in part of the very work to which he so triumphantly appeals, the Christian Revelation? Nothing could have reconciled us to a burst of such—audacity—we use the word considerably—but the exhibition of a spirit divinely embued with the Christian faith. For what else, we ask, but the truths beheld by the Christian Faith, can be beyond those "personal forms," "beyond Jehovah," "the choirs of shouting angels," and the "empyrean thrones?"

This omission is felt the more deeply—the more sadly—from such introduction as there is of Christianity; for one of the books of the "Excursion" begins with a very long,

and a very noble eulogy on the Church Establishment in England. How happened it that he who pronounced such eloquent panegyric—that they who so devoutly inclined their ear to imbibe it—should have been all contented with

"That basis laid, these principles of faith
Announced,"

and yet throughout the whole course of their discussions, before and after, have forgotten apparently that there was either Christianity or a Christian Church in the world?

We do not hesitate to say, that the thoughtful and sincere student of this great poet's works, must regard such omission—such inconsistency or contradiction—with more than the pain of regret; for there is no relief afforded to our defrauded hearts from any quarter to which we can look. A pledge has been given, that all the powers and privileges of a Christian poet shall be put forth and exercised for our behoof—for our delight and instruction; all other poetry is to sink away before the heavenly splendour; Urania, or a greater muse, is invoked; and after all this solemn, and more than solemn preparation made for our initiation into the mysteries, we are put off with a well-merited encomium on the Church of England, from Bishop to Curate inclusive; and though we have much fine poetry, and some high philosophy, it would puzzle the most ingenious to detect much, or any, Christian religion.

Should the opinion boldly avowed be challenged, we shall enter into further exposition and illustration of it; meanwhile, we confine ourselves to some remarks on one of the most elaborate tales of domestic suffering in the Excursion. In the story of Margaret, containing, we believe, more than four hundred lines—a tolerably long poem in itself—though the whole and entire state of a poor deserted wife and mother's heart, for year after year of "hope deferred, that maketh the heart sick," is described, or rather dissected, with an almost cruel anatomy—not one quivering fibre being left unexposed—all the fluctuating, and finally all the constant agitations laid bare and naked that carried her at last lingeringly to the grave—there is not—except one or two weak lines, that seem to have been afterwards purposely dropped in—one single syllable about Religion. Was Margaret a Christian?—Let the answer be yes—as good a Christian as ever kneeled in the small mountain chapel, in whose churchyard her body now waits for the resurrection. If she was—then the picture painted of her and her agonies, is a libel not only on her character, but on the character of all other poor Christian women in this Christian land. Placed as she was, for so many years, in the clutches of so many passions—she surely must have turned sometimes—ay, often, and often, and often, else had she sooner left the clay—towards her Lord and Saviour. But of such "comfort let no man speak," seems to have been the principle of Mr. Wordsworth; and the consequence is, that this, perhaps the most elaborate picture he ever painted of any conflict within any one human heart, is, with all its pathos, repulsive to very religious

mind—that being wanting without which the entire representation is vitiated, and necessarily false to nature—to virtue—to resignation—to life—and to death. These may seem strong words—but we are ready to defend them in the face of all who may venture to impugn their truth.

This utter absence of Revealed Religion, where it ought to have been all-in-all—for in such trials in real life it is all-in-all, or we regard the existence of sin or sorrow with repugnance—shocks far deeper feelings within us than those of taste, and throws over the whole poem to which the tale of Margaret belongs, an unhappy suspicion of hollowness and insincerity in that poetical religion, which at the best is a sorry substitute indeed for the light that is from heaven. Above all, it flings, as indeed we have intimated, an air of absurdity over the orthodox Church-of-Englandism—for once to quote a not inexpressive barbarism of Bentham—which every now and then breaks out either in passing compliment—amounting to but a bow—or in eloquent laudation, during which the poet appears to be prostrate on his knees. He speaks nobly of cathedrals, and minsters, and so forth, reverently adorning all the land; but in none—no, not one of the houses of the humble, the hovels of the poor into which he takes us—is the religion preached in those cathedrals and minsters, and chanted in prayer to the pealing organ, represented as the power that in peace supports the roof-tree, lightens the hearth, and is the guardian, the tutelary spirit of the lowly dwelling. Can this be right? Impossible. And when we find the Christian religion thus excluded from Poetry, otherwise as good as ever was produced by human genius, what are we to think of the Poet, and of the world of thought and feeling, fancy and imagination, in which he breathes, nor fears to declare to all men that he believes himself to be one of the order of the High Priests of nature?

Shall it be said, in justification of the poet, that he presents a very interesting state of mind, sometimes found actually existing, and does not pretend to present a model of virtue?—that there are miseries which shut some hearts against religion, sensibilities which, being too severely tried, are disinclined, at least at certain stages of their suffering, to look to that source for comfort?—that this is human nature, and the description only follows it?—that when “in peace and comfort” her best hopes were directed to “the God in heaven,” and that her habit in that respect was only broken up by the stroke of her calamity, causing such a derangement of her mental power as should deeply interest the sympathies?—in short, that the poet is an artist, and that the privation of all comfort from religion completes the picture of her desolation?

Would that such defence were of avail! But of whom does the poet so pathetically speak?

“Of one whose stock
Of virtues bloom’d beneath this lowly roof.
She was a woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much—pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts By some especial care

Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being who, by adding love to fear,
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded partner lack’d not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart—
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanish’d. They who pass’d
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply
After his daily work, until the light
Had fail’d, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.”

We are prepared by that character, so amply and beautifully drawn, to pity her to the utmost demand that may be made on our pity—to judge her leniently, even if in her desertion she finally give way to inordinate and incurable grief. But we are not prepared to see her sinking from depth to depth of despair, in wilful abandonment to her anguish, without oft-repeated and long-continued passionate prayers for support or deliverance from her trouble, to the throne of mercy. Alas! it is true that in our happiness our gratitude to God is too often more selfish than we think, and that in our misery it faints or dies. So is it even with the best of us—but surely not all life long—unless the heart has been utterly crushed—the brain itself distorted in its functions, by some calamity, under which nature’s self gives way, and falls into ruins like a rent house when the last prop is withdrawn.

“Nine tedious years
From their first separation—nine long years
She linger’d in unquiet widowhood—
A wife and widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting.”

It must indeed, and it is depicted by a master’s hand. But even were it granted that sufferings, such as hers, might, in the course of nature, have extinguished all heavenly comfort—all reliance on God and her Saviour—the process and progress of such fatal relinquishment should have been shown, with all its struggles and all its agonies; if the religion of one so good was so unavailing, its weakness should have been exhibited and explained, that we might have known assuredly why, in the multitude of the thoughts within her, there was no solace for her sorrow, and how unpitying Heaven let her die of grief.

This tale, too, is the very first told by the Pedlar to the Poet, under circumstances of much solemnity, and with affecting note of preparation. It arises naturally from the sight of the ruined cottage near which they, by appointment, have met; the narrator puts his whole heart into it, and the listener is overcome by its pathos. No remark is made on Margaret’s grief, except that

“I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had told.
I stood, and leaning o’er the garden wall,
Review’d that woman’s sufferings; and it seem’d
To comfort me, while, with a brother’s love,
I bless’d her in the impotence of grief.
Then towards the cottage I return’d, and traced
Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
The secret spirit of humanity,
Which, ’mid the calm, oblivious tendencies
Of nature—’mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
And silent overgrowths, still unreviv’d.”

Such musings receive the Pedlar's approbation, and he says—

"My friend! enough to sorrow you have given.
The purposes of wisdom ask no more.
Be wise and cheerful, and no longer read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye.
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here."

As the Poet, then, was entirely satisfied with the tale, so ought to be all readers. No hint is dropped that there was any thing to blame in the poor woman's nine years' passion—no regret breathed that she had sought not, by means offered to all, for that peace of mind which passeth all understanding—no question asked, how it was that she had not communed with her own afflicted heart, over the pages of that Book where it is written, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give ye rest!" The narrator had indeed said, that on revisiting her during her affliction—

"Her humble lot of books,
Which in her cottage window, heretofore,
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemingly order, now, with straggling leaves,
Lay scatter'd here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall."

But he does not mention the Bible.

What follows has always seemed to us of a questionable character—

"I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er,
As once I pass'd, into my heart convey'd
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still; and look'd so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which fill'd my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the griefs
The passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appear'd an idle dream, that could not live
Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
And walk'd along my road in happiness."

These are fine lines; nor shall we dare, in face of them, to deny the power of the beauty and serenity of nature to assuage the sorrow of us mortal beings, who live for awhile on her breast. Assuredly, there is sorrow that may be so assuaged; and the sorrow here spoken of—for poor Margaret, many years dead—was of that kind. But does not the heart of a man beat painfully, as if violence were offered to its most sacred memories, to hear from the lips of wisdom, that "sorrow and despair from ruin and from change, and all the griefs" that we can suffer here below, appear an idle dream among plumes, and weeds, and speargrass, and mists, and rain-drops? "Where meditation is!" What meditation? Turn thou, O child of a day! to the New Testament, and therein thou mayest find comfort. It matters not whether a spring-bank be thy seat by Rydal Mere, "while heaven and earth do make one imagery," or thou sittest in the shadow of death, beside a tomb.

We said, that for the present we should confine our remarks on this subject to the story of Margaret; but they are, more or less, applicable to almost all the stories in the *Excursion*. In many of the eloquent disquisitions and harangues of the Three Friends, they carry along with them the sympathies of all mankind; and the wisest may be enlightened by their wisdom. But what we complain of is, that neither in joy nor grief, happiness nor

misery, is religion the dominant principle of thought and feeling in the character of any one human being with whom we are made acquainted, living or dead. Of not a single one, man or woman, are we made to feel the beauty of holiness—the power and the glory of the Christian Faith. Beings are brought before us whom we pity, respect, admire, love. The great poet is high-souled and tender-hearted—his song is pure as the morning, bright as day, solemn as night. But his inspiration is not drawn from the Book of God, but from the Book of Nature. Therefore it fails to sustain his genius when venturing into the depths of tribulation and anguish. Therefore imperfect are his most truthful delineations of sins and sorrows; and not in his philosophy, lofty though it be, can be found alleviation or cure of the maladies that kill the soul. Therefore never will the *Excursion* become a bosom-book, endeared to all ranks and conditions of a Christian People, like "The Task" or the "Night Thoughts." Their religion is that of revelation—it acknowledges no other source but the word of God. To that word, in all difficulty, distress, and dismay, these poets appeal; and though they may sometimes, or often, misinterpret its judgment, that is an evil incident to finite intelligence; and the very consciousness that it is so, inspires a perpetual humility that is itself a virtue found to accompany only a Christian's Faith.

We have elsewhere vindicated the choice of a person of low degree as Chief of the "*Excursion*," and exult to think that a great poet should have delivered his highest doctrines through the lips of a Scottish Pedlar.

"Early had he learn'd
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery of life that cannot die."

Throughout the poem he shows that he does reverence it, and that his whole being has been purified and elevated by its spirit. But fond as he is of preaching, and excellent in the art or gift, a Christian Preacher he is not—at best a philosophical divine. Familiar by his parentage and nurture with all most hallowed round the poor man's hearth, and guarded by his noble nature from all offence to the sanctities there enshrined; yet the truth must be told, he speaks not, he expounds not the Word as the servant of the Lord, as the follower of Him Crucified. There is very much in his announcements to his equals wide of the mark set up in the New Testament. We seem to hear rather of a divine power and harmony in the universe than of the Living God. The spirit of Christianity as connected with the Incarnation of the Deity, the Human-God, the link between heaven and earth, between helplessness and omnipotence, ought to be everywhere visible in the religious effusions of a Christian Poet—wonder and awe for the greatness of God, gratitude and love for his goodness, humility and self-abasement for his own unworthiness. Passages may perhaps be found in the "*Excursion*" expressive of that spirit, but they are few and faint, and somewhat professional, falling not from the Pedlar but from the Pastor. If the mind, in

forming its conceptions of divine things, is prouder of its own power than humbled in the comparison of its personal inferiority; and in enunciating them in verse, more rejoices in the consciousness of the power of its own genius than in the contemplation of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift—it has not attained Piety, and its worship is not an acceptable service. For it is self-worship—worship of the creature's own conceptions, and an overweening complacency with its own greatness, in being able to form and so to express them as to win or command the praise and adoration of his fellow mortals. Those lofty speculations, alternately declaimed among the mountains, with an accompaniment of waterfalls, by men full of fancies and eloquent of speech, elude the hold of the earnest spirit longing for truth; disappointment and impatience grow on the humblest and most reverent mind, and escaping from the multitude of vain words, the neophyte finds in one chapter of a Book forgotten in that babblement, a light to his way and a support to his steps, which, following and trusting, he knows will lead him to everlasting life.

Throughout the poem there is much talk of the light of nature, little of the light of revelation, and they all speak of the theological doctrines of which our human reason gives us assurance. Such expressions as these may easily lead to important error, and do, indeed, seem often to have been misconceived and misemployed. What those truths are which human reason, unassisted, would discover to us on these subjects, it is impossible for us to know, for we have never seen it left absolutely to itself. Instruction, more or less, in wandering tradition, or in express, full, and recorded revelation, has always accompanied it; and we have never had other experience of the human mind than as exerting its powers under the light of imparted knowledge. In these circumstances, all that can be properly meant by those expressions which regard the power of the human mind to guide, to enlighten, or to satisfy itself in such great inquiries, is not that it can be the discoverer of truth, but that, with the doctrines of truth set before it, it is able to deduce arguments from its own independent sources which confirm it in their belief; or that, with truth and error proposed to its choice, it has means, to a certain extent, in its own power, of distinguishing one from the other. For ourselves, we may understand easily that it would be impossible for us so to shut out from our minds the knowledge which has been poured in upon them from our earliest years, in order to ascertain what self-left reason could find out. Yet this much we are able to do in the speculations of our philosophy. We can inquire, in this light, what are the grounds of evidence which nature and reason themselves offer for belief in the same truths. A like remark must be extended to the morality which we seem now to inculcate from the authority of human reason. We no longer possess any such independent morality. The spirit of a higher, purer, moral law than man could discover, has been breathed over the world, and we have grown up in the air and

the light of a system so congenial to the highest feelings of our human nature, that the wisest spirits amongst us have sometimes been tempted to forget that its origin is divine.

Had the Excursion been written in the poet's later life, it had not been so liable to such objections as these; for much of his poetry composed since that era is imbued with a religious spirit, answering the soul's desire of the devoutest Christian. His Ecclesiastical Sonnets are sacred poetry indeed. How comprehensive the sympathy of a truly pious heart! How religion reconciles different forms, and modes, and signs, and symbols of worship, provided only they are all imbued with the spirit of faith! This is the toleration Christianity sanctions—for it is inspired by its own universal love. No sectarian feeling here, that would exclude or debar from the holiest chamber in the poet's bosom one sincere worshipper of our Father which is in heaven. Christian brethren! By that mysterious bond our natures are brought into more endearing communion—now more than ever, brethren, because of the blood that was shed for us all from His blessed side! Even of that most awful mystery in some prayer-like strains the Poet tremblingly speaks, in many a strain, at once so affecting and so elevating—breathing so divinely of Christian charity to all whose trust is in the Cross! Who shall say what form of worship is most acceptable to the Almighty? All are holy in which the soul seeks to approach him—holy

“The chapel lurking among trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace which a busy world disdains;”

we feel as the poet felt when he breathed to the image of some old abbey—

“Once ye were holy, ye are holy still!”

And what heart partakes not the awe of his

“Beneath that branching roof
Self-poised, and scoop'd into ten thousand cells
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die?”

Read the first of these sonnets with the last—and then once more the strains that come between—and you will be made to feel how various and how vast beneath the sky are the regions set apart by the soul for prayer and worship; and that all places become consecrated—the high and the humble—the mean and the magnificent—in which Faith and Piety have sought to hold communion with Heaven.

But they who duly worship God in temples made with hands, meet every hour of their lives “Devotional Excitements” as they walk among his works; and in the later poetry of Wordsworth these abound—age having solemnized the whole frame of his being, that was always alive to religious emotions—but more than ever now, as around his paths in the evening of life longer fall the mysterious shadows. More fervid lines have seldom flowed from his spirit in its devoutest mood, than some awakened by the sounds and sights of a happy day in May—to him—though no church-bell was heard—a Sabbath. His occasional poems are often felt by us to be linked together by the finest affinities, which perhaps

are but affinities between the feelings they inspire. Thus we turn from those lines to some on a subject seemingly very different, from a feeling of such fine affinities—which haply are but those subsisting between all things and thoughts that are pure and good. We hear in them how the Poet, as he gazes on a Family that holds not the Christian Faith, embraces them in the folds of Christian Love—and how religion as well as nature sanctifies the tenderness that is yearning at his heart towards them—"a Jewish Family"—who, though outcasts by Heaven's decree, are not by Heaven, still merciful to man, left forlorn on earth.

How exquisite the stanzas composed in one of the Catholic Chapels in Switzerland—

"Doom'd as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The Altar, to deride the Fane,
Where patient sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

"I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn Cell to gaze;
Hail to the firm unmoving Cross,
Aloft, where pine their branches toss!
And to the Chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

"Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champaign wide,
*Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity—to bid us think
And feel, if we would know."*

How sweetly are interspersed among them some of humbler mood, most touching in their simple pathos—such as a Hymn for the boatmen as they approach the Rapids—Lines on hearing the song of the harvest damsels floating homeward on the lake of Brienz—the Italian Itinerant and the Swiss Goatherd—and the Three Cottage Girls, representatives of Italian, of Helvetian, and of Scottish beauty, brought together, as if by magic, into one picture, each breathing in her natural grace the peculiar spirit and distinctive character of her country's charms! Such gentle visions disappear, and we sit by the side of the Poet as he gazes from his boat floating on the Lake of Lugano, on the Church of San Salvador, which was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, while the altar and the image of the patron saint were untouched, and devoutly listen while he exclaims—

"Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times,
Let all remind the soul of heaven;
Our slack devotion needs them all;
And faith, so oft of sense the thrall,
While she, by aid of Nature, climbs,
May hope to be forgiven."

We do not hesitate to pronounce "Eclipse of the Sun, 1820," one of the finest lyrical effusions of combined thought, passion, sentiment, and imagery, within the whole compass of poetry. If the beautiful be indeed essentially different from the sublime, we here feel that they may be made to coalesce so as to be in their united agencies one divine power. We called it lyrical, chiefly because of its transitions. Though not an ode, it is ode-like in its invocations; and it might be set and sung to music if Handel were yet alive, and St. Cecilia

to come down for an hour from heaven. How solemn the opening strain! and from the momentary vision of Science on her speculative Tower, how gently glides Imagination down, to take her place by the Poet's side, in his bark afloat beneath Italian skies—suddenly bedimmed, lake, land, and all, with a something between day and night. In a moment we are conscious of Eclipse. Our slight surprise is lost in the sense of a strange beauty—solemn not sad—settling on the face of nature and the abodes of men. In a single stanza filled with beautiful names of the beautiful, we have a vision of the Lake, with all its noblest banks, and bays, and bowers, and mountains—when in an instant we are wafted away from a scene that might well have satisfied our imagination and our heart—if high emotions were not uncontrollable and omnipotent—wafted away by Fancy with the speed of Fire—lakes, groves, cliffs, mountains, all forgotten—and alight amid an aerial host of figures, human and divine, on a spire that seeks the sky. How still those imaged sanctities and purities, all white as snows of Apennine, stand in the heavenly region, circle above circle, and crowned as with a zone of stars! They are imbued with life. In their animation the figures of angels and saints, insensate stones no more, seem to feel the Eclipse that shadows them, and look awful in the portentous light. In his inspiration he transcends the grandeur even of that moment's vision—and beholds in the visages of that aerial host those of the sons of heaven darkening with celestial sorrow at the Fall of Man—when

"Throngs of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared."

Never since the day on which the wondrous edifice, in its consummate glory, first saluted the sun, had it inspired in the soul of kneeling saint a thought so sad and so sublime—a thought beyond the reaches of the soul of him whose genius bade it bear up all its holy adornments so far from earth, that the silent company seem sometimes, as light and shadow move among them, to be in ascension to heaven. But the Sun begins again to look like the Sun, and the poet, relieved by the joyful light from that awful trance, delights to behold

"Town and Tower,
The Vineyard and the Olive Bower,
Their lustre re-assume;"

and "breathes there a man with soul so dead," that it burns not within him as he hears the heart of the husband and the father breathe forth its love and its fear, remembering on a sudden the far distant whom it has never forgotten—a love and a fear that saddens, but disturbs not, for the vision he saw had inspired him with a trust in the tender mercies of God? Commit to faithful memory, O Friend! who may some time or other be a traveller over the wide world, the sacred stanzas that brings the Poem to a close—and it will not fail to comfort thee when sitting all alone by the well in the wilderness, or walking along the strange streets of foreign cities, or lying in thy cot at midnight afloat on far-off seas.

"O ye, who guard and grace my Home
While in far-distant Lands we roam,
Was such a vision given to you?
Or, while we look'd with favour'd eyes,
Did sullen mist hide lake and skies
And mountains from your view?"

"I ask in vain—and know far less,
If sickness, sorrow, or distress
Have spared my dwelling to this hour;
Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love,
And all-controlling power."

Let us fly from Rydal to Sheffield. James Montgomery is truly a religious poet. His popularity, which is great, has, by some scribes sitting in the armless chairs of the scornors, been attributed chiefly to the power of sectarianism. He is, we believe, a sectary; and, if all sects were animated by the spirit that breathes throughout his poetry, we should have no fears for the safety and stability of the Established Church; for in that selfsame spirit was she built, and by that selfsame spirit were her foundations dug in a rock. Many are the lights—solemn and awful all—in which the eyes of us mortal creatures may see the Christian dispensation. Friends, looking down from the top of a high mountain on a city-sprinkled plain, have each his own vision of imagination—each his own sinking or swelling of heart. They urge no inquisition into the peculiar affections of each other's secret breasts—all assured, from what each knows of his brother, that every eye there may see God—that every tongue that has the gift of lofty utterance may sing his praises aloud—that the lips that remain silent may be mute in adoration—and that all the distinctions of habits, customs, professions, modes of life, even natural constitution and form of character, if not lost, may be blended together in mild amalgamation under the common atmosphere of emotion, even as the towers, domes, and temples, are all softly or brightly interfused with the huts, cots, and homesteads—the whole scene below harmonious, because inhabited by beings created by the same God—in his own image—and destined for the same immortality.

It is base therefore, and false, to attribute, in an invidious sense, any of Montgomery's fame to any such cause. No doubt many persons read his poetry on account of its religion, who, but for that, would not have read it; and no doubt, too, many of them neither feel nor understand it. But so, too, do many persons read Wordsworth's poetry on account of its religion—the religion of the woods—who, but for that, would not have read it; and so, too, many of them neither feel nor understand it. So is it with the common manners-painting poetry of Crabbe—the dark passion-painting poetry of Byron—the high-romance-painting poetry of Scott—and so on with Moore, Coleridge, Southey, and the rest. But it is to the *mens divinitior*, however displayed, that they owe all their fame. Had Montgomery not been a true poet, all the Religious Magazines in the world could not have saved his name from forgetfulness and oblivion. He might have flouted his day like the melancholy Poppy—melancholy in all its ill-scented gauntness; but as it is, he is like the Rose of Sharon, whose balm and beauty shall not

with, planted on the bank of "that river whose streams make glad the city of the Lord."

Indeed, we see no reason why poetry, conceived in the spirit of a most exclusive sectarianism, may not be of a very high order, and powerfully impressive on minds whose religious tenents are most irreconcilable and hostile to those of the sect. Feelings, by being unduly concentrated, are not thereby necessarily enfeebled—on the contrary, often strengthened; and there is a grand austerity which the imagination more than admires—which the conscience scarcely condemns. The feeling, the conviction from which that austerity grows, is in itself right; for it is a feeling—a conviction of the perfect righteousness of God—the utter worthlessness of self-left man—the awful sanctity of duty—and the dreadfulness of the judgment-doom, from which no soul is safe till the seals have been broken, and the Archangel has blown his trumpet. A religion planted in such convictions as these, may become dark and disordered in its future growth within the spirit; and the tree, though of good seed and in a strong soil, may come to be laden with bitter fruit, and the very droppings of its leaves may be pernicious to all who rest within its shade. Still, such shelter is better in the blast than the trunk of a dead faith; and such food, unwholesome though it be, is not so miserable as famine to a hungry soul.

Grant, then, that there may be in Mr. Montgomery's poetry certain sentiments, which, in want of a better word, we call Sectarian. They are not necessarily false, although not perfectly reconcilable to our own creed, which, we shall suppose, is true. On the contrary, we may be made much the better and the wiser men by meditating upon them; for while they may, perhaps, (and we are merely making a supposition,) be too strongly felt by him, they may be too feebly felt by us—they may, perhaps, be rather blots on the beauty of his poetry than of his faith—and if, in some degree, offensive in the composition of a poem, far less so, or not at all, in that of a life.

All his shorter poems are stamped with the character of the man. Most of them are breathings of his own devout spirit, either delighted or awed by a sense of the Divine goodness and mercy towards itself, or tremblingly alive—not in mere sensibility to human virtues and joys, crimes and sorrows, for that often belongs to the diseased and depraved—but in solemn, moral, and religious thought, to all of good or evil befalling his brethren of mankind. "A sparrow cannot fall to the ground"—a flower of the field cannot wither immediately before his eyes—without awakening in his heart such thoughts as we may believe God intended should be awakened even by such sights as these; for the fall of a sparrow is a scriptural illustration of his providence, and his hand framed the lily, whose array is more royal than was that of Solomon in all his glory. Herein he resembles Wordsworth—less profound certainly—less lofty; for in its highest moods the genius of Wordsworth walks by itself—unapproachable—on the earth it beautifies. But Montgomery's poetical piety is far more prevalent over his whole character; it

belongs more essentially and permanently to man. Perhaps, although we shall not say so, it may be more simple, natural, and true. More accordant it certainly is, with the sympathies of ordinary minds. The piety of his poetry is far more Christian than that of Wordsworth's. It is in all his feelings, all his thoughts, all his imagery; and at the close of most of his beautiful compositions, which are so often avowals, confessions, prayers, thanksgivings, we feel, not the moral, but the religion of his song. He "improves" all the "occasions" of this life, because he has an "eye that broods on its own heart;" and that heart is impressed by all lights and shadows, like a river or lake whose waters are pure—pure in their sources and in their course. He is, manifestly, a man of the kindest home-affections; and these, though it is to be hoped the commonest of all, preserved to him in unabated glow and freshness by innocence and piety, often give vent to themselves in little hymns and odelike strains, of which the rich and even novel imagery shows how close is the connection between a pure heart and a fine fancy, and that the flowers of poetry may be brought from afar, nor yet be felt to be exotics—to intertwine with the very simplest domestic feelings and thoughts—so simple, so perfectly human, that there is a touch of surprise on seeing them capable of such adornment, and more than a touch of pleasure on feeling how much that adornment becomes them—brightening without changing, and adding admiration to delight—wonder to love.

Montgomery, too, is almost as much of an egotist as Wordsworth; and thence, frequently, his power. The poet who keeps all the appearances of external nature, and even all the passions of humanity, at arm's length, that he may gaze on, inspect, study, and draw their portraits, either in the garb they ordinarily wear, or in a fancy dress, is likely to produce a strong likeness indeed; yet shall his pictures be wanting in ease and freedom—they shall be cold and stiff—and both passion and imagination shall desiderate something characteristic in nature, of the mountain or the man. But the poet who hugs to his bosom every thing he loves or admires—themselves, or the thoughts that are their shadows—who is himself still the centre of the enchanted circle—who, in the delusion of a strong creative genius, absolutely believes that were he to die, all that he now sees and hears delighted would die with him—who not only sees

"Poetic visions swarm on every bough,"

but the history of all his own most secret emotions written on the very rocks—who gathers up the many beautiful things that in the prodigality of nature lie scattered over the earth, neglected or unheeded, and the more dearly, the more passionately loves them, because they are now appropriated to the uses of his own imagination, who will by her alchemy so further brighten them that the thousands of eyes that formerly passed them by unseen or scorned, will be dazzled by their rare and transcendent beauty—he is the "prevailing Poet!" Montgomery neither seeks nor shuns those dark thoughts that will come and

go, night and day, unbidden, forbidden across the minds of all men—fortified although the main entrances may be; but when they do invade his secret, solitary hours, he turns even such visitants to a happy account, and questions them, ghostlike as they are, concerning both the future and the past. Melancholy as often his views are, we should not suppose him a man of other than a cheerful mind; for whenever the theme allows or demands it, he is not averse to a sober glee, a composed gaiety that, although we cannot say it ever so far sparkles out as to deserve to be called absolutely brilliant, yet lends a charm to his lighter-toned compositions, which it is peculiarly pleasant now and then to feel in the writings of a man whose genius is naturally, and from the course of life, not gloomy indeed, but pensive, and less disposed to indulge itself in smiles than in tears.

CHAPTER III.

PEOPLE now-a-days will write, because they see so many writing; the impulse comes upon them from without, not from within; loud voices from streets and squares of cities call on them to join the throng, but the still small voice that speaketh in the penetralia of the spirit is mute; and what else can be the result, but, in place of the song of lark, or linnet, or nightingale, at the best a concert of mocking-birds, at the worst an oratorio of ganders and bubbleys?

At this particular juncture or crisis, the disease would fain assume the symptoms of religious inspiration. The poetasters are all pious—all smitten with sanctity—Christian all over—and crossing and jostling on the Course of Time—as they think, on the high-road to Heaven and Immortality. Never was seen before such a shameless set of hypocrites. Down on their knees they fall in booksellers' shops, and, crowned with foolscap, repeat to Blue-Stockings prayers addressed in doggerel to the Deity! They bandy about the Bible as if it were an Album. They forget that the poorest sinner has a soul to be saved, as well as a set of verses to be damned; they look forward to the First of the Month with more fear and trembling than to the Last Day; and beseech a critic to be merciful upon them with far more earnestness than they ever beseeched their Maker. They pray through the press—vainly striving to give some publicity to what must be private for evermore; and are seen wiping away, at tea-parties, the tears of contrition and repentance for capital crimes perpetrated but on paper, and perpetrated thereon so paltrily, that so far from being worthy of hell-fire, such delinquents, it is felt, would be more suitably punished by being singed like plucked fowls with their own unsaleable sheets. They are frequently so singed; yet singeing has not the effect upon them for which singeing is designed; and like chickens in a shower that have got the pip, they keep still gasping and shooting out their tongues, and walking on tip toe with their tails down, till finally they go to

roost in some obscure corner, and are no more seen among bipeds.

Among those, however, who have been unfortunately beguiled by the spirit of imitation and sympathy into religious poetry, one or two—who for the present must be nameless—have shown feeling; and would they but obey their feeling, and prefer walking on the ground with their own free feet, to attempting to fly in the air with borrowed and bound wings, they might produce something really poetical, and acquire a creditable reputation. But they are too aspiring; and have taken into their hands the sacred lyre without due preparation. He who is so familiar with his Bible, that each chapter, open it where he will, teems with household words, may draw thence the theme of many a pleasant and pathetic song. For is not all human nature, and all human life, shadowed forth in those pages! But the heart, to sing well from the Bible, must be imbued with religious feelings, as a flower is alternately with dew and sunshine. The study of *THE BOOK* must have been begun in the simplicity of childhood, when it was felt to be indeed divine—and carried on through all those silent intervals in which the soul of manhood is restored, during the din of life, to the purity and peace of its early being. The Bible must be to such a poet even as the sky—with its sun, moon, and stars—its boundless blue with all its cloud-mysteries—its peace deeper than the grave, because of realms beyond the grave—its tumult louder than that of life, because heard altogether in all the elements. He who begins the study of the Bible late in life, must, indeed, devote himself to it—night and day—and with an humble and a contrite heart as well as an awakened and soaring spirit, ere he can hope to feel what he understands, or to understand what he feels—thoughts and feelings breathing in upon him, as if from a region hanging, in its mystery, between heaven and earth. Nor do we think that he will lightly venture on the composition of poetry drawn from such a source. The very thought of doing so, were it to occur to his mind, would seem irreverent; it would convince him that he was still the slave of vanity, and pride, and the world.

They alone, therefore, to whom God has given genius as well as faith, zeal, and benevolence—will, of their own accord, fix their Pindus either on Lebanon or Calvary—and of these but few. The genius must be high—the faith sure—and human love must coalesce with divine, that the strain may have power to reach the spirits of men, immersed as they are in matter, and with all their apprehensions and conceptions blended with material imagery, and the things of this moving earth and this restless life.

So gifted and so endowed, a great or good poet, having chosen his subject well within religion, is on the sure road to immortal fame. His work, when done, must secure sympathy for ever; a sympathy not dependent on creeds, but out of which creeds spring, all of them manifestly moulded by imaginative affections of religion. Christian Poetry will outlive every other; for the time will come when

Christian Poetry will be deeper and higher far than any that has ever yet been known among men. Indeed, the sovereign songs hitherto have been either religious or superstitious; and as “the day-spring from on High that has visited us” spreads wider and wider over the earth, “the soul of the world, dreaming of things to come,” shall assuredly see more glorified visions than have yet been submitted to her ken. That Poetry has so seldom satisfied the utmost longings and aspirations of human nature, can only have been because Poetry has so seldom dealt in its power with the only mysteries worth knowing—the greater mysteries of religion, into which the Christian is initiated only through faith, an angel sent from heaven to spirits struggling by supplications and sacrifices to escape from sin and death.

These, and many other thoughts and feelings concerning the “Vision and the Faculty divine,” when employed on divine subjects, have arisen within us, on reading—which we have often done with delight—“*The Christian Year*,” so full of Christian poetry of the purest character. Mr. Keble is a poet whom Cowper himself would have loved—for in him piety inspires genius, and fancy and feeling are celestialized by religion. We peruse his book in a tone and temper of spirit similar to that which is breathed upon us by some calm day in spring, when all imagery is serene and still—cheerful in the main—yet with a touch and a tinge of melancholy, which makes all the blended bliss and beauty at once more endearing and more profound. We should no more think of criticising such poetry than of criticising the clear blue skies—the soft green earth—the “liquid lapse” of an unpolluted stream, that

“Doth make sweet music with the enamell’d stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every flower
It overtaketh on its pilgrimage.”

All is purity and peace; as we look and listen, we partake of the universal calm, and feel in nature the presence of Him from whom it emanated. Indeed, we do not remember any poetry nearly so beautiful as this, which reminds one so seldom of the poet’s art. We read it without ever thinking of the place which its author may hold among poets, just as we behold a “lily of the field” without comparing it with other flowers, but satisfied with its own pure and simple loveliness; or each separate poem may be likened, in its unsentimentations—unambitious—unconscious beauty—to

“A violet by a mossy stone,
Half hidden to the eye.”

Of all the flowers that sweeten this fair earth, the violet is indeed the most delightful in itself—form, fragrance, and colour—nor less in the humility of its birthplace, and in its haunts in the “sunshiny shade.” Therefore, ’tis a meet emblem of those sacred songs that may be said to blossom on Mount Zion.

The most imaginative poetry inspired by Nature, and dedicated to her praise, is never perfectly and consummately beautiful till it ascends into the religious; but then religion breathes from, and around, and about it, only at last when the poet has been brought, by the

leading of his own aroused spirit, to the utmost pitch of his inspiration. He begins, and continues long, unblamed in mere emotions of beauty; and he often pauses unblamed, and brings his strain to a close, without having forsaken this earth, and the thoughts and feelings which belong alone to this earth. But poetry like that of the "Christian Year" springs at once, visibly and audibly, from religion as its fount. If it, indeed, issue from one of the many springs religion opens in the human heart, no fear of its ever being dried up. Small indeed may seem the silver line, when first the rill steals forth from its sacred source! But how soon it begins to sing with a clear loud voice in the solitude! Bank and brae—tree, shrub, and flower—grow greener at each successive waterfall—the rains no more disturb that limpid element than the dews—and never does it lose some reflection of the heavens.

In a few modest words, Mr. Keble states the aim and object of his volume. He says truly, that it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess in her authorized formularies an ample and secure provision, both for a sound rule of faith and a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion. The object of his publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer-Book. We add, that its object has been attained. In England, "The Christian Year" is already placed in a thousand homes among household books. People are neither blind nor deaf yet to lovely sights and sounds—and a true poet is as certain of recognition now as at any period of our literature. In Scotland we have no prayer-book printed on paper—perhaps it would be better if we had; but the prayer-book which has inspired Mr. Keble, is compiled and composed from another Book, which, we believe, is more read in Scotland than in any other country. Here the Sabbath reigns in power, that is felt to be a sovereign power over all the land. We have, it may be said, no prescribed holydays; but all the events recorded in the Bible, and which in England make certain days holy in outward as well as inward observances, are familiar to our knowledge and our feeling *here*; and therefore the poetry that seeks still more to hallow them to the heart, will find every good heart recipient of its inspiration—for the Christian creed is "wide and general as the casing air," and felt as profoundly in the Highland heather-glen, where no sound of psalms is heard but on the Sabbath, as in the cathedral towns and cities of England, where so often

"Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

Poetry in our age has been made too much a thing to talk about—to show off upon—as if the writing and the reading of it were to be reckoned among what are commonly called accomplishments. Thus, poets have too often sacrificed the austere sanctity of the divine art to most unworthy purposes, of which, perhaps, the most unworthy—for it implies much voluntary self-degradation—is mere popularity.

Against all such low aims he is preserved, who, with Christian meekness, approaches the muse in the sanctuaries of religion. He seeks not to force his songs on the public ear; his heart is free from the fever of fame; his poetry is praise and prayer. It meets our ear like the sound of psalms from some unseen dwelling among the woods or hills, at which the wayfarer or wanderer stops on his journey, and feels at every pause a holier solemnity in the silence of nature. Such poetry is indeed *got by heart*; and memory is then tenacious to the death, for her hold on what she loves is strengthened as much by grief as by joy; and, when even hope itself is dead—if, indeed, hope ever dies—the trust is committed to despair. Words are often as unforgettable as voiceless thoughts; they become very thoughts themselves, and *are* what they represent. How are many of the simply, rudely, but fervently and beautifully rhymed Psalms of David, very part and parcel of the most spiritual treasures of the Scottish peasant's being!

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leatheth me
The quiet waters by."

These four lines sanctify to the thoughtful shepherd on the braes every stream that glides through the solitary places—they have often given colours to the greensward beyond the brightness of all herbage and of all flowers. Thrice hallowed is that poetry which makes us mortal creatures feel the union that subsists between the Book of Nature and the Book of Life!

Poetry has endeared childhood by a thousand pictures, in which fathers and mothers behold with deeper love the faces of their own offspring. Such poetry has almost always been the production of the strongest and wisest minds. Common intellects derive no power from earliest memories; the primal morn, to them never bright, has utterly faded in the smoky day; the present has swallowed up the past, as the future will swallow up the present, each season of life seems to stand by itself as a separate existence; and when old age comes, how helpless, melancholy, and forlorn! But he who lives in the spirit of another creed, sees far into the heart of Christianity. He hears a divine voice saying—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!" Thus it is that poetry throws back upon the New Testament the light she has borrowed from it, and that man's mortal brother speaks in accordance with the Saviour of man. On a dead, insensible flower—a lily—a rose—a violet—a daisy, Poetry may pour out all its divinest power—just as the sun itself sometimes seems to look with all its light on some one especial blossom, all at once made transparently lustrous. And what if the flower be alive in all its leaves—and have in it an immortal spirit? Or what if its leaves be dead, and the immortal spirit gone away to heaven? Genius shall change death into sleep—till the grave, in itself so dark and dismal, shall seem a bed of bright and celestial repose. From poetry, in words or marble—both alike still and serene as water

upon grass—we turn to the New Testament, and read of the “Holy Innocents.” “They were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” We look down into the depths of that text—and we then turn again to Keble’s lines, which from those depths have flowed over upon the uninspired page! Yet not uninspired—if that name may be given to strains which, like the airs that had touched the flowers of Paradise, “whisper whence they stole those balmy sweets.” Revelation has shown us that “we are greater than we know;” and who may neglect the Infancy of that Being for whom Godhead died!

They who read the lines on “the Holy Innocents” in a mood of mind worthy of them, will go on, with an equal delight, through those on “The Epiphany.” They are separated in the volume by some kindred and congenial strains; but when brought close together, they occupy the still region of thought as two large clear stars do of themselves seem to occupy the entire sky.

How far better than skilfully—how inspiringly does this Christian poet touch upon each successive holy theme—winging his way through the stainless ether like some dove gliding from tree to tree, and leaving one place of rest only for another equally happy, on the folding and unfolding of its peaceful flight! Of late many versifiers have attempted the theme; and some of them with shameful unsuccess. A bad poem on such a subject is a sin. He who is a Christian indeed, will, when the star of Bethlehem rises before his closed eyes, be mute beneath the image, or he will hail it in strains simple as were those of the shepherds watching their flocks by night when it appeared of old, high as were those of the sages who came from the East bearing incense to the Child in the Manger. Such are this Poet’s strains, evolving themselves out of the few words—“Behold, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was: when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”

The transition from those affecting lines is natural and delightful to a strain further on in the volume, entitled “Catechism.” How soon the infant spirit is touched with love—another name for religion—none may dare to say who have watched the eyes of little children. Feeling and thought would seem to come upon them like very inspiration—so strong it often is, and sudden, and clear; yet, no doubt, all the work of natural processes going on within Immortality. The wisdom of age has often been seen in the simplicity of childhood—creatures but five or six years old—soon perhaps about to disappear—astonishing, and saddening, and subliming the souls of their parents and their parents’ friends, by a holy precocity of all pitiful and compassionate feelings, blended into a mysterious piety that has made them sing happy hymns on the brink of leath and the grave. Such affecting instances of almost infantine unfolding of the spirit beneath spiritual influence should not be rare—nor are they rare—in truly Christian house-

holds. Almost as soon as the heart is moved by filial affection, that affection grows reverent even to earthly parents—and, ere long, becomes piety towards the name of God and Saviour. Yet philosophers have said that the child must not be too soon spoken to about religion. Will they fix the time? No—let religion—a myriad-meaning word—be whispered and breathed round about them, as soon as intelligence smiles in their eyes and quickens their ears, while enjoying the sights and sounds of their own small yet multitudinous world.

Let us turn to another strain of the same mood, which will be read with tears by many a grateful heart—on the “Churching of Women.” What would become of us without the ceremonies of religion? How they strengthen the piety out of which they spring!—How, by concentrating all that is holy and divine around their outward forms, do they purify and sanctify the affections! What a change on his infant’s face is wrought before a father’s eyes by Baptism! How the heart of the husband and the father yearns, as he sees the wife and mother kneeling in thanksgiving after childbirth!

“Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” What is all the poetry that genius ever breathed over all the flowers of this earth, to that one divine sentence! It has inspired our Christian poet—and here is his heart-felt homily.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“Sweet nurslings of the vernal skies,
Bathed in soft airs, and fed with dew,
What more then magic in you lies
To fill the heart’s fond view?
In childhood’s sports companions gay,
In sorrow, on Life’s downward way,
How soothing! in our last decay
Memorials prompt and true.

“Relics ye are of Eden’s bowers,
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair,
As when ye crown’d the sunshine hours
Of happy wanderers there.
Fall’n all beside—the world of life,
How is it stain’d with fear and strife!
In Reason’s world what storms are rife,
What passions rage and glare!

“But cheerful and unchanged the while
Your first and perfect form ye show,
The same that won Eve’s matron smile
In the world’s opening glow.
The stars of Heaven a course are taught
Too high above our human thought;—
Ye may be found if ye are sought,
And as we gaze we know.

“Ye dwell beside our paths and homes,
Our paths of sin, our homes of sorrow,
And guilty man, where’er he roams,
Your innocent mirth may borrow.
The birds of air before us fleet,
They cannot brook our shame to meet—
But we may taste your solace sweet,
And come again to-morrow.

“Ye fearless in your nests abide—
Nor may we scorn, too proudly wise,
Your silent lessons, undescried
By all but lowly eyes:
For ye could draw th’ admiring gaze
Of Him who worlds and hearts surveys:
Your order wild, your fragrant maze,
He taught us how to prize.

“Ye felt your Maker’s smile that hour,
As when he paused and own’d you good,
His blessing on earth’s primal bower,
Yet felt it all renew’d.

What care ye now, if winter's storm
Sweep ruthless o'er each silken form?
Christ's blessing at your heart is warm,
Ye fear no vexing mood.

"Alas! of thousand bosoms kind,
That daily court you and caress,
How few the happy secret find
Of your calm loveliness!
'Live for to-day! to-morrow's light
To-morrow's cares shall bring to sight.
Go, sleep like closing flowers at night,
And Heaven thy morn will bless.'"

Such poetry as this must have a fine influence on all the best human affections. Sacred are such songs to sorrow—and sorrow is either a frequent visitor, or a domesticated inmate, in every household. Religion may thus be made to steal unawares, even during ordinary hours, into the commonest ongoings of life. Call not the mother unhappy who closes the eyes of her dead child, whether it has smiled lonely in the house, the sole delight of her eyes, or bloomed among other flowers, now all drooping for its sake—nor yet call the father unhappy who lays his sweet son below the earth, and returns to the home where his voice is to be heard never more. That affliction brings forth feelings unknown before in his heart; calming all turbulent thoughts by the settled peace of the grave. Then every page of the Bible is beautiful—and beautiful every verse of poetry that thence draws its inspiration. Thus in the pale and almost ghostlike countenance of decay, our hearts are not touched by the remembrance alone of beauty which is departed, and by the near extinction of loveliness which we behold fading before our eyes—but a beauty, fairer and deeper far, lies around the hollow eye and the sunken cheek, breathed from the calm air of the untroubled spirit that has heard resigned the voice that calls it away from the dim shades of mortality. Well may that beauty be said to be religious; for in it speaks the soul, conscious, in the undreaded dissolution of its earthly frame, of a being destined to everlasting bliss. With every deep emotion arising from our contemplation of such beauty as this—religious beauty beaming in the human countenance, whether in joy or sadness, health or decay—there is profoundly interfused a sense of the soul's spirituality, which silently sheds over the emotion something celestial and divine, rendering it not only different in degree, but altogether distinct in kind, from all the feelings that things merely perishable can inspire—so that the spirit is fully satisfied, and the feeling of beauty is but a vivid recognition of its own deathless being and ethereal essence. This is a feeling of beauty which was but faintly known to the human heart in those ages of the world when all other feelings of beauty were most perfect; and accordingly we find, in the most pathetic strains of their elegiac poetry, lamentations over the beauty intensely worshipped in the dust, which was to lie for ever over its now beamless head. But to the Christian who may have seen the living lustre leave the eye of some beloved friend, there must have shone a beauty in his latest smile, which spoke not alone of a brief scene closed, but of an endless scene unfolding; while its cessation, in-

stead of leaving him in utter darkness, seemed to be accompanied with a burst of light.

Much of our most fashionable Modern Poetry is at once ludicrously and lamentably unsuitable and unseasonable to the innocent and youthful creatures who shed tears "such as angels weep" over the shameful sins of shameless sinners, crimes which, when perpetrated out of Poetry, and by persons with vulgar surnames, elevate their respective heroes to that vulgar altitude—the gallows. The darker—the stronger passions, forsooth! And what hast thou to do—my dove-eyed Margaret—with the darker and stronger passions? Nothing whatever in thy sweet, still, serene, and seemingly almost sinless world. Be the brighter and the weaker passions thine—brighter indeed—yet say not *weaker*, for they are strong as death;—Love and Pity, Awe and Reverence, Joy, Grief, and Sorrow, sunny smiles and showery tears—be these all thy own—and sometimes, too, on melancholy nights, let the heaven of thy imagination be spanned in its starriness by the most celestial Evanescence—a Lunar Rainbow.

There is such perfect sincerity in the "Christian Year," such perfect sincerity, and consequently such simplicity, that though the production of a fine and finished scholar, we cannot doubt that it will some day or other find its way into many of the dwellings of humble life. Such descent, if descent it be, must be of all receptions the most delightful to the heart of a Christian poet. As intelligence spreads more widely over the land, why fear that it will deaden religion? Let us believe that it will rather vivify and quicken it; and that in time true poetry, such as this, of a character somewhat higher than probably can be yet felt, understood, and appreciated by the people, will come to be easy and familiar, and blended with all the other benign influences breathed over their common existence by books. Meanwhile the "Christian Year" will be finding its way into many houses where the inmates read from the love of reading—not for mere amusement only, but for instruction and a deeper delight; and we shall be happy if our recommendation causes its pages to be illumined by the gleams of a few more peaceful hearths, and to be rehearsed by a few more happy voices in the "parlour twilight."

We cannot help expressing the pleasure it has given us to see so much true poetry coming from Oxford. It is delightful to see that classical literature, which sometimes, we know not how, certainly has a chilling effect on poetical feeling, there warming it as it ought to do, and causing it to produce itself in song. Oxford has produced many true poets; Collins, Warton, Bowles, Heber, Milman, and now Keble—are all her own—her inspired sons. Their strains are not steeped in "port and prejudice;" but in the—Isis. Heaven bless Ifley and Godstow—and many another sweet old ruined place—secluded, but not far apart from her own inspiring Sanctities. And those who love her not, never may the Muses love!

CHAPTER IV.

IN his Poem, entitled "The Omnipresence of the Deity," Mr. Robert Montgomery writes thus:—

"Lo! there, in yonder fancy-haunted room,
What mutter'd curses trembled through the gloom,
When pale, and shiv'ring, and bedew'd with fear,
The dying skeptic felt his hour draw near!
From his parch'd tongue no sainted murmurs fell,
No bright hopes kindled at his faint farewell;
As the last throes of death convulsed his cheek,
He gnash'd, and scowl'd, and raised a hideous shriek.
Rounded his eyes into a ghastly glare,
Lock'd his white lips—and all was mute despair!
Go, child of darkness, see a Christian die;
No horror pales his lip, or rolls his eye;
No dreadful doubts, or dreamy terrors, start
The hope Religion pillows on his heart,
When with a dying hand he waves adieu
To all who love so well, and weep so true:
Meek, as an infant to the mother's breast
Turns fondly longing for its wonted rest,
He pants for where congenial spirits stray,
Turns to his God, and sighs his soul away."

First, as to the execution of this passage. "Fancy-haunted" may do, but it is not a sufficiently strong expression for the occasion. In every such picture as this, we demand appropriate vigour in every word intended to be vigorous, and which is important to the effect of the whole.

"From his parch'd tongue no sainted murmurs fell,
No bright hopes kindled at his faint farewell."

How could they!—The line but one before is,

"What mutter'd curses trembled through the gloom."

This, then, is purely ridiculous, and we cannot doubt that Mr. Montgomery will confess that it is so; but independently of that, he is describing the death-bed of a person who, *ex hypothesi*, could have no bright hopes, could breathe no sainted murmurs. He might as well, in a description of a negress, have told us that she had no long, smooth, shining, yellow locks—no light-blue eyes—no ruddy and rosy cheeks—nor yet a bosom white as snow. The execution of the picture of the Christian is not much better—it is too much to use, in the sense here given to them, no fewer than three verbs—"pales"—"rolls"—"starts," in four lines.

"The hope Religion pillows on the heart," is not a good line, and it is a borrowed one.

"When with a dying hand he waves adieu," conveys an unnatural image. Dying men do not act so. Not thus are taken eternal farewells. The motion in the sea-song was more natural—

"She waved adieu, and kiss'd her lily hand."

"Weeps so true," means nothing, nor is it English. The grammar is not good of,

"He pants for where congenial spirits"

Neither is the word *pants* by any means the right one; and in such an awful crisis, admire who may the simile of the infant longing for its mother's breast, we never can in its present shape; while there is in the line,

"Turns to his God, and sighs his soul away;"

a prettiness we very much dislike—alter one word, and it would be voluptuous—nor do we hesitate to call the passage a puling one alto-

gether, and such as ought to be expunged from all paper.

But that is not all we have to say against it—it is radically and essentially bad, because it either proves nothing of what it is meant to prove—or what no human being on earth ever disputed. Be fair—be just in all that concerns religion. Take the best, the most moral, if the word can be used, the most enlightened Skeptic, and the true Christian, and compare their death-beds. That of the Skeptic will be disturbed or disconsolate—that of the Christian confiding or blessed. But to contrast the death-bed of an absolute maniac, muttering curses, gnashing and scowling, and "raising a hideous shriek," and "rounding his eyes with a ghastly glare," and convulsed, too, with severe bodily throes—with that of a convinced, confiding, and conscientious Christian, a calm, meek, undoubting believer, happy in the "hope religion pillows on his heart," and enduring no fleshly agonies, can serve no purpose under the sun. Men who have the misery of being unbelievers, are at all times to be pitied—most of all in their last hours; but though theirs be then dim melancholy, or dark despair, they express neither the one state nor the other by mutterings, curses, and hideous shrieks. Such a wretch there may sometimes be—like him "who died and made no sign;" but there is no more sense in seeking to brighten the character of the Christian by its contrast with that of such an Atheist, than by contrast with a fiend to brighten the beauty of an angel.

Finally, are the deathbeds of all good Christians so calm as this—and do they all thus meekly

"Pant for where congenial spirits stray,"

a line, besides its other vice, most unscriptural! Congenial spirit is not the language of the New Testament. Alas! for poor weak human nature at the dying hour! Not even can the Christian always then retain unquaking trust in his Saviour! "This is the blood that was shed for thee," are words whose mystery quells not always nature's terror. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is renewed in vain—and he remembers, in doubt and dismay, words that, if misunderstood, would appal all the Christian world—"My God—my God—why hast thou forsaken me?" Perhaps, before the Faith, that has waxed dim and died in his brain distracted by pain, and disease, and long sleeplessness, and a weight of woe—for he is a father who strove in vain to burst those silken ties, that winding all round and about his very soul and his very body, bound him to those dear little ones, who are of the same spirit and the same flesh,—we say, before that Faith could, by the prayers of holy men, be restored and revived, and the Christian, once more comforted by thinking on Him, who for all human beings did take upon him the rueful burden and agonies of the Cross—Death may have come for his prey, and left the chamber, of late so hushed and silent, at full liberty to weep! Enough to know, that though Christianity be divine, we are human,—that the vessel is weak in which that glorious light may be enshrined—weak as the pot-

ter's clay—and that though Christ died to save sinners, sinners who believe in Him, and therefore shall not perish, may yet lose hold of the belief when their understandings are darkened by the shadow of death, and, like Peter losing faith and sinking in the sea, feel themselves descending into some fearful void, and cease here to be, ere they find voice to call on the name of the Lord—"Help, or I perish!"

What may be the nature of the thoughts and feelings of an Atheist, either when in great joy or great sorrow, full of life and the spirit of life, or in mortal malady and environed with the toils of death, it passes the power of our imagination even dimly to conceive; nor are we convinced that there ever was an utter Atheist. The thought of a God will enter in, barred though the doors be, both of the understanding and the heart, and all the windows supposed to be blocked up against the light. The soul, blind and deaf as it may often be, cannot always resist the intimations all life long, day and night, forced upon it from the outer world; its very necessities, nobler far than those of the body, even when most degraded, importunate when denied their manna, are to it oftentimes a silent or a loud revelation. Then, not to feel and think as other beings do with "discourse of reason," is most hard and difficult indeed, even for a short time, and on occasions of very inferior moment. Being men, we are carried away, willing or unwilling, and often unconsciously, by the great common instinct; we keep sailing with the tide of humanity, whether in flow or ebb—fierce as demons and the sons of perdition, if that be the temper of the congregating hour—mild and meek as Pity, or the new-born babe, when the afflatus of some divine sympathy has breathed through the multitude, nor one creature escaped its influence, like a spring-day that steals through a murmuring forest, till not a single tree, even in the darkest nook, is without some touch of the season's sunshine. Think, then, of one who would fain be an Atheist, conversing with the "sound, healthy children of the God of heaven!" To this reason, which is his solitary pride, arguments might in vain be addressed, for he exults in being "an Intellectual All in All," and is a bold-browed sophist to daunt even the eyes of Truth—eyes which can indeed "outstare the eagle" when their ken is directed to heaven, but which are turned away in aversion from the human countenance that would dare to deny God. Appeal not to the intellect of such a man, but to his heart; and let not even that appeal be conveyed in any fixed form of words—but let it be an appeal of the smiles and tears of affectionate and loving lips and eyes—of common joys and common griefs, whose contagion is often felt, beyond prevention or cure, where two or three are gathered together—among families thinly sprinkled over the wilderness, where, on God's own day, they repair to God's own house, a lowly building on the braise, which the Creator of suns and systems despiseth not, nor yet the beatings of the few contrite hearts therein assembled to worship him—in the cathedral's "long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults"—in mighty multitudes all

crowded in silence, as beneath the shadow of a thunder-cloud, to see some one single human being die—or swaying and swinging backwards and forwards, and to and fro, to hail a victorious armament returning from the war of Liberty, with him who hath "taken the start of this majestic world" conspicuous from afar in front, encircled with music, and with the standard of his unconquered country afloat above his head. Thus, and by many thousand other potent influences for ever at work, and from which the human heart can never make its safe escape—let it flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the loneliest of the multitude of the isles of the sea—are men, who vainly dream that they are Atheists, forced to feel God. Nor happens this but rarely—nor are such "angel-visits few and far between." As the most cruel have often, very often, thoughts tender as dew, so have the most dark often, very often, thoughts bright as day. The sun's golden finger writes the name of God on the clouds, rising or setting, and the Atheist, falsely so called, starts in wonder and in delight, which his soul, because it is immortal, cannot resist, to behold that Bible suddenly opened before his eyes on the sky. Or some old, decrepit, gray-haired crone, holds out her shrivelled hand, with dim eyes patiently fixed on his, silently asking charity—silently, but in the holy name of God; and the Atheist, taken unawares, at the very core of his heart bids "God bless her," as he relieves her uncomplaining miseries.

If then Atheists do exist, and if their death-beds may be described for the awful or melancholy instruction of their fellow-men, let them be such Atheists as those whom, let us not hesitate to say it, we may blamelessly love with a troubled affection; for our Faith may not have preserved us from sins from which they are free—and we may give even to many of the qualities of their most imperfect and unhappy characters almost the name of virtues. No curses on their death-beds will they be heard to utter. No black scowlings—no horrid gnashing of teeth—no hideous shriekings will there appal the loving ones who watch and weep by the side of him who is dying disconsolate. He will hope, and he will fear, now that there is a God indeed everywhere present—visible now in the tears that fall, audible now in the sighs that breathe for his sake—in the still small voice. That Being forgets not those by whom he has been forgotten; least of all, the poor "Fool who has said in his heart there is no God," and who knows at last that a God there is, not always in terror and trembling, but as often perhaps in the assurance of forgiveness, which undeserved by the best of the good, may not be withheld even from the worst of the bad, if the thought of a God and a Saviour pass but for a moment through the darkness of the departing spirit—like a dove shooting swiftly, with its fair plumage, through the deep but calm darkness that follows the subsided storm.

So, too, with respect to Deists. Of unbelievers in Christianity there are many kinds—the reckless, the ignorant, the callous, the confirmed, the melancholy, the doubting, the de

spairing—the good. At their death-beds, too, may the Christian poet, in imagination, take his stand—and there may he even hear

“The still sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, but of amplest power
To soften and subdue !”

Often all the sounds and sights there will be full of most rueful anguish; and that anguish will groan in the poet's lays when his human heart, relieved from its load of painful sympathies, shall long afterwards be inspired with the pity of poetry, and sing in elegies, sublime in their pathos, the sore-sufferings and the dim distress that clouded and tore the dying spirit, longing, but all unable—profound though its longings be—as life's daylight is about to close upon that awful gloaming, and the night of death to descend in oblivion—to believe in the Redeemer.

Why then turn but to such death-bed, if indeed religion, and not superstition, described that scene—as that of Voltaire? Or even Rousseau, whose dying eyes sought, in the last passion, the sight of the green earth, and the blue skies, and the sun shining so brightly, when all within the brain of his worshipper was fast growing dimmer and more dim—when all the unsatisfied spirit, that scarcely hoped a future life, knew not how it could ever take farewell of the present with tenderness enough, and enough of yearning and craving after its disappearing beauty, and when as if the whole earth were at that moment beloved even as his small peculiar birthplace—

“Et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.”

The Christian poet, in his humane wisdom, will, for instruction's sake of his fellow-men, and for the discovery and the revealment of ever-sacred truth, keep aloof from such death-beds as these, or take his awful stand beside them to drop the perplexed and pensive tear. For we know not what it is that we either hear or see; and holy Conscience, hearing through a confused sound, and seeing through an obscure light, fears to condemn, when perhaps she ought only to pity—to judge another, when perhaps it is her duty but to use that inward eye for her own delinquencies. He, then, who designs to benefit his kind by strains of high instruction, will turn from the death-bed of the famous Wit, whose brilliant fancy hath waxed dim as that of the clown—whose malignant heart is quaking beneath the Power it had so long derided, with terrors over which his hated Christian triumphs—and whose intellect, once so perspicacious that it could see but too well the moths that are in the sun, the specks and stains that are on the flowing robe of nature herself—prone, in miserable contradiction to its better being, to turn them as proofs against the power and goodness of the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity—is now palsy-stricken as that of an idiot, and knows not even the sound of the name of its once vain and proud possessor—when crowded theatres had risen up with one rustle to honour, and then, with deafening acclamations,

“Raised a mortal to the skies !”

There he is—it matters not now whether on

down or straw—stretched, already a skeleton, and gnashing—may it be in senselessness, for otherwise what pangs are these!—gnashing his teeth, within lips once so eloquent, now white with foam and slaver; and the whole mouth, of yore so musical, grinning ghastly, like the fleshless face of fear-painted death! Is that Voltaire? He who, with wit, thought to shear the Son of God of all his beams—with wit, to loosen the dreadful fastenings of the Cross?—with wit, to scoff at Him who hung thereon, while the blood and water came from the wound in his blessed side?—with wit to drive away those Shadows of Angels, that were said to have rolled off the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre of the resurrection?—with wit, to deride the ineffable glory of transfigured God-head on the Mount, and the sweet and solemn semblance of the Man Jesus in the garden?—with wit, to darken all the decrees of Providence?—and with wit,

“To shut the gates of Mercy on mankind !”

Nor yet will the Christian poet long dwell in his religious strains, though awhile he may linger there, “and from his eyelids wipe the tears that sacred pity hath engendered,” beside the dying couch of Jean Jaques Rousseau—a couch of turf beneath trees—for he was ever a lover of Nature, though he loved all things living or dead as madmen love. His soul, while most spiritual, was sensual still, and with tendrils of flesh and blood embraced—even as it did embrace the balm-breathing form of voluptuous woman—the very phantoms of his most etherealized imagination. Vice stained all his virtues—as roses are seen, in some certain soils, and beneath some certain skies, always to be blighted, and their fairest petals to bear on them something like blots of blood. Over the surface of the mirror of his mind, which reflected so much of the imagery of man and nature, there was still, here and there, on the centre or round the edges, rust-spots, that gave back no image, and marred the proportions of the beauty and the grandeur that yet shone over the rest of the circle set in the rich carved gold. His disturbed, and distracted, and defeated friendships, that all vanished in insane suspicions, and seemed to leave his soul as well satisfied in its fierce or gloomy void, as when it was filled with airy and glittering visions, are all gone for ever now. Those many thoughts and feelings—so melancholy, yet still fair, and lovely, and beautiful—which, like bright birds encaged, with ruffled and drooping wings, once so apt to soar, and their music mute, that used to make the wide woods to ring, were confined within the wires of his jealous heart—have now all flown away, and are at rest! Who sits beside the wild and wondrous genius, whose ravings entranced the world? who wipes the death-sweat from that capacious forehead, once filled with such a multitude of disordered but aspiring fancies? Who, that his beloved air of heaven may kiss and cool it for the last time, lays open the covering that hides the marble sallowness of Rousseau's sin-and-sorrow-haunted breast? One of Nature's least gifted children—to whose eyes nor earth nor heaven ever beamed with beauty—

to whose heart were known but the meanest charities of nature; yet mean as they were, how much better in such an hour, than all his imaginings most magnificent! For had he not suffered his own offspring to pass away from his eyes, even like the wood-shadows, only less beloved and less regretted? And in the very midst of the prodigality of love and passion, which he had poured out over the creations of his ever-distempered fancy, let his living children, his own flesh and blood, disappear as paupers in a chance-governed world?—A world in which neither parental nor filial love were more than the names of nonentities—Father, Son, Daughter, Child, but empty syllables, which philosophy heeded not—or rather loved them in their emptiness, but despised, hated, or feared them, when for a moment they seemed pregnant with a meaning from heaven, and each in its holy utterance signifying God!

No great moral or religious lesson can well be drawn, or say rather so well, from such anomalous death-beds, as from those of common unbelievers. To show, in all its divine power, the blessedness of the Christian's faith, it must be compared, rather than contrasted, with the faith of the best and wisest of Deists. The ascendancy of the heavenly over the earthly will then be apparent—as apparent as the superior lustre of a star to that of a lighted-up window in the night. For above all other things in which the Christian is happier than the Deist—with the latter, the life beyond the grave is but a dark hope—to the former, "immortality has been brought to light by the Gospel." That difference embraces the whole spirit. It may be less felt—less seen when life is quick and strong: for this earth alone has much and many things to embrace and enchain our being—but in death the difference is as between night and day.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS AVIARY.

FIRST CANTICLE.

THE present Age, which, after all, is a very pretty and pleasant one, is feelingly alive and widely awake to the manifold delights and advantages with which the study of Natural History swarms, and especially that branch of it which unfolds the character and habits, physical, moral, and intellectual, of those most interesting and admirable creatures—Birds. It is familiar not only with the shape and colour of beak, bill, claw, talon, and plume, but with the purposes for which they are designed, and with the instincts which guide their use in the beautiful economy of all-gracious Nature. We remember the time when the very word Ornithology would have required interpretation in mixed company; when a naturalist was looked on as a sort of out-of-the-way but amiable monster. Now, one seldom meets with man, woman, or child, who does not know a hawk from a handsaw, or even, to adopt the more learned reading, from a heron-shew; a black swan is no longer erroneously considered a *rara avis* any more than a black sheep; while the Glasgow Gander himself, no longer apocryphal, has taken his place in the national creed, belief in his existence being merely blended with wonder at his magnitude, and some surprise perhaps among the scientific, that he should be as yet the sole specimen of that enormous Anser.

The chief cause of this advancement of knowledge in one of its most delightful departments, has been the gradual extension of its study from stale books written by men, to that book ever fresh from the hand of God. And the second—another yet the same—has been the gradual change wrought by a philosophical spirit in the observation, delineation, and arrangement of the facts and laws with which the science is conversant, and which it exhibits

in the most perfect harmony and order. Neophytes now range for themselves, according to their capacities and opportunities, the fields, woods, rivers, lakes, and seas; and proficient, no longer confining themselves to mere nomenclature, enrich their works with anecdotes and traits of character, which, without departure from truth, have imbued bird-biography with the double charm of reality and romance.

Compare the intensity and truth of any natural knowledge insensibly acquired by observation in very early youth, with that corresponding to it picked up in later life from books! In fact, the habit of distinguishing between things as different, or of similar forms, colours, and characters, formed in infancy, and childhood, and boyhood, in a free intercourse and communion with Nature, while we are merely seeking and finding the divine joy of novelty and beauty, perpetually occurring before our eyes in all her haunts, may be made the foundation of an accuracy of judgment of inappreciable value as an intellectual endowment. So entirely is this true, that we know many observant persons, that is, observant in all things intimately related with their own pursuits, and with the experience of their own early education, who, with all the pains they could take in after-life, have never been able to distinguish by name, when they saw them, above half-a-dozen, if so many, of our British singing-birds; while as to knowing them by their song, that is wholly beyond the reach of their uninstructed ear, and a shillfa chants to them like a yellow yoldrin. On seeing a small bird peeping out of a hole in the eaves, and especially on hearing him chatter, they shrewdly suspect him to be a sparrow, though it does not by any means follow that their suspicions are always verified; and though, when sitting with her white breast so lovely out of the

"auld clay bigging" in the window-corner, he cannot mistake Mistress Swallow, yet when flitting in fly-search over the stream, and ever and anon dipping her wing-tips in the lucid coolness, 'tis an equal chance that he misnames her Miss Marten.

What constant caution is necessary during the naturalist's perusal even of the very best books! From the very best we can only obtain knowledge at second-hand, and this, like a story circulated among village gossips, is more apt to gain in falsehood than in truth, as it passes from one to another; but in field study we go at once to the fountain-head, and obtain our facts pure and unalloyed by the theories and opinions of previous observers. Hence it is that the utility of books becomes obvious. You witness with your own eyes some puzzling, perplexing, strange, and unaccountable—fact; twenty different statements of it have been given by twenty different ornithologists; you consult them all, and getting a hint from one, and a hint from another, here a glimmer of light to be followed, and there a gloom of darkness to be avoided—why, who knows but that in the end you do yourself solve the mystery, and absolutely become not only happy but illustrious! People sitting in their own parlour with their feet on the fender, or in the sanctum of some museum, staring at stuffed specimens, imagine themselves naturalists; and in their presumptuous and insolent ignorance, which is often total, scorn the wisdom of the wanderers of the woods, who have for many studious and solitary years been making themselves familiar with all the beautiful mysteries of instinctive life. Take two boys, and set them respectively to pursue the two plans of study. How puzzled and perplexed will be the one who pores over the "interminable terms" of a system in books, having meanwhile no access to, or communion with nature! The poor wretch is to be pitied—nor is he any thing else than a slave. But the young naturalist who takes his first lessons in the fields, observing the unrivalled scene which creation everywhere displays, is perpetually studying in the power of delight and wonder, and laying up knowledge which can be derived from no other source. The rich boy is to be envied, nor is he any thing else than a king. The one sits bewildered among words, the other walks enlightened among things; the one has not even the shadow, the other more than the substance—the very essence and life of knowledge; and at twelve years old he may be a better naturalist than ever the mere bookworm will be, were he to outlive old Tommy Balmer.

In education—late or early—for heaven's sake let us never separate things and words! They are married in nature; and what God hath put together let no man put asunder—'tis a fatal divorce. Without things, words accumulated by misery in the memory, had far better die than drag out an useless existence in the dark; without words, their stay and support, things unaccountably disappear out of the storehouse, and may be for ever lost. But bind a thing with a word, a strange link, stronger than any steel, and softer than any

silk, and the captive remains for ever happy in its bright prison-house. On this principle, it is indeed surprising at how early an age children can be instructed in the most interesting parts of natural history—ay, even a babe in arms. Remember Coleridge's beautiful lines to the Nightingale:—

"That strain again!

Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lip,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! and I deem it wise
To make him Nature's child."

How we come to love the Birds of Bewick, and White, and the two Wilsons, and Montagu, and Mudie, and Knapp, and Selby, and Swainson, and Audubon, and many others familiar with their haunts and habits, their affections and their passions, till we feel that they are indeed our fellow-creatures, and part of one wise and wonderful system! If there be sermons in stones, what think ye of the hymns and psalms, matin and vesper, of the lark, who at heaven's gate sings—of the wren, who pipes her thanksgivings as the slant sunbeam shoots athwart the mossy portal of cave, in whose fretted roof she builds her nest above the waterfall! In cave-roof? Yea—we have seen it so—just beneath the cornice. But most frequently we have detected her procreant cradle on old mossy stump, mouldering walls or living rock—sometimes in cleft of yew-tree or hawthorn—for hang the globe with its imperceptible orifice in the sunshine or the storm, and St. Catharine sits within heedless of the outer world, counting her beads with her sensitive breast that broods in bliss over the priceless pearls.

Ay, the men we have named, and many other blameless idolaters of Nature, have worshipped her in a truly religious spirit, and have taught us their religion. All our great poets have loved the *Minnesingers* of the woods—Thomson, and Cowper, and Wordsworth, as dearly as Spenser, and Shakspeare, and Milton. From the inarticulate language of the groves, they have inhaled the enthusiasm that inspired some of the finest of their own immortal strains. "Lonely wanderer of Nature" must every poet be—and though often self-wrap his wanderings through a spiritual world of his own, yet as some fair flower silently asks his eye to look on it, some glad bird his ear solicits with a song, how intense is then his perception—his emotion how profound—while his spirit is thus appealed to, through all its human sensibilities, by the beauty and the joy perpetual even in the most solitary places!

Our moral being owes deep obligation to all who assist us to study nature aright; for believe us, it is high and rare knowledge to know and to have the true and full use of our eyes. Millions go to the grave in old age without ever having learned it; they were just beginning, perhaps, to acquire it, when they sighed to think that "they who look out of the windows were darkened;" and that while they had been instructed how to look, sad shadows had fallen on the whole face of Nature, and that the time for those intuitions was gone for ever. But the

science of seeing has now found favour in our eyes; and blessings be with them who can discover, discern, and describe the least as the greatest of nature's works—who can see as distinctly the finger of God in the lustre of the humming-bird murmuring round a rose-bush, as in that of the star of Jove shining sole in heaven.

Take up now almost any book you may on any branch of Natural History, and instead of the endless, dry details of imaginary systems and classifications, in which the ludicrous littleness of man's vain ingenuity used to be set up as a sort of symbolical scheme of revelation of the sublime varieties of the inferior—as we choose to call it—creation of God, you find high attempts in an humble spirit rather to illustrate tendencies and uses, and harmonies, and order, and design. With some glorious exceptions, indeed, the naturalists of the day gone by showed us a science that was but a skeleton—little but dry bones; with some inglorious exceptions, indeed, the naturalists of the day that is now, have been desirous to show us a living, breathing, and moving body—to explain, as far as they might, its mechanism and its spirit. Ere another century elapse, how familiar may men be with all the families of the flowers of the field, and the birds of the air, with all the interdependencies of their characters and their kindreds, perhaps even with the mystery of that instinct which is now seen working wonders, not only beyond the power of reason to comprehend, but of imagination to conceive!

How deeply enshrouded are felt to be the mysteries of nature, when, thousands of years after Aristotle, we hear Audubon confess his utter ignorance of what migrations and non-migrations mean—that 'tis hard to understand why such general laws as these should be—though their benign operation is beautifully seen in the happiness provided alike for all—whether they reside in their own comparatively small localities, nor ever wish to leave them—or at stated seasons instinctively fly away over thousands of miles, to drop down and settle for a while on some spot adapted to their necessities, of which they had prescience afar off, though seemingly wafted thither like leaves upon the wind! Verily, as great a mystery is that Natural Religion by the theist studied in woods and on mountains and by sea-shores, as that Revelation which philosophers will not believe because they do not understand—"the blinded bigot's scorn" deriding man's highest and holiest happiness—Faith!

We must not now go a bird-nesting, but the first time we do we shall put Bishop Mant's "Months" in our pocket. The good Bishop—who must have been an indefatigable bird-nester in his boyhood—though we answer for him that he never stole but one egg out of four, and left undisturbed the callow young—treats of those beauteous and wondrous structures in a style that might make Professor Rennie jealous, who has written like a Vitruvius on the architecture of birds. He expatiates with uncontrolled delight on the unwearied activity of the architects, who, without any apprenticeship to the trade, are journeymen, nay, master-

builders, the first spring of their full-fledged lives; with no other tools but a bill, unless we count their claws, which however seem, and that only in some kinds, to be used but in carrying materials. With their breasts and whole bodies, indeed, most of them round off the soft insides of their procreant cradles, till they fit each brooding bunch of feathers to a hair's-breadth, as it sits close and low on eggs or eyeless young, a *leelle* higher raised up above their gaping babies, as they wax from downy infancy into plumier childhood, which they do how swiftly, and how soon have they flown! You look some sunny morning into the bush, and the abode in which they seemed so cozy the day before is utterly forsaken by the joyous ingrates—now feebly fluttering in the narrow grove, to them a wide world filled with delight and wonder—to be thought of never more. With all the various materials used by them in building their different domiciles, the Bishop is as familiar as with the sole material of his own wig—though, by the by, last time we had the pleasure of seeing and sitting by him, he wore his own hair—"but that not much;" for, like our own, his scone was bald, and, like it, showed the organ of constructiveness as fully developed as Christopher or a Chaffinch. He is perfectly well acquainted, too, with all the diversities of their modes of building—their orders of architecture—and eke with all those of situation chosen by the kinds—whether seemingly simple, in cunning that deceives by a show of carelessness and heedlessness of notice, or with craft of concealment that baffles the most searching eye—hanging their beloved secret in gloom not impervious to sun and air—or, trustful in man's love of his own home, affixing the nest beneath the eaves, or in the flowers of the lattice, kept shut for their sakes, or half-opened by fair hands of virgins whose eyes gladden with heartborn brightness as each morning they mark the growing beauty of the brood, till they smile to see one almost as large as its parents sitting on the rim of the nest, when all at once it hops over, and, as it flutters away like a leaf, seems surprised that it can fly!

Yet there are still a few wretched quacks among us whom we may some day perhaps drive down into the dirt. There are idiots who will not even suffer sheep, cows, horses, and dogs, to escape the disgusting perversions of their anile anecdoteage—who, by all manner of drivelling lies, libel even the common domestic fowl, and impair the reputation of the bantam. Newspapers are sometimes so infested by the trivial trash, that in the nostrils of a naturalist they smell on the breakfast table like rotten eggs; and there are absolutely volumes of the slaver bound in linen, and lettered with the names of the expectorators on the outside, resembling annuals—we almost fear with prints. In such hands, the ass loses his natural attributes, and takes the character of his owner; and as the anecdote-monger is seen astride on his cuddly, you wonder what may be the meaning of the apparition, for we defy you to distinguish the one donk from the other, the rider from the ridden, except by the more inexpressive countenance of the one, and

the ears of the other in uncomputed longitude dangling or erect.

We can bear this libellous gossip least patiently of all with birds. If a ninny have some stories about a wonderful goose, let him out with them, and then waddle away with his fat friend into the stackyard—where they may take sweet counsel together in the “fause-house.” Let him, with open mouth and grozet eyes, say what he chooses of “Pretty Poll,” as she clings in her cage, by beak or claws, to stick or wire, and in her naughty vocabulary let him hear the impassioned eloquence of an Aspasia inspiring a Pericles. But, unless his crown itch for the Crutch, let him spare the linnet on the briery bush among the broom—the laverock on the dewy braird or in the rosy cloud—the swan on her shadow—the eagle in his eyrie, in the sun, or at sea.

The great ornithologists and the true are the authorities that are constantly correcting those errors of popular opinion about the fowls of the air, which in every country, contrary to the evidence of the senses, and in spite of observations that may be familiar to all, gain credence with the weak and ignorant, and in process of time compose even a sort of system of the vilest superstition. It would be a very curious inquiry to trace the operation of the causes that, in different lands, have produced with respect to birds national prejudices of admiration or contempt, love or even hatred; and in doing so, we should have to open up some strange views of the influence of imagination on the head and heart. It may be remarked that an excuse will be generally found for such fallacies in the very sources from which they spring; but no excuse can be found—on the contrary, in every sentence the fool scribbles, a glaring argument is shown in favour of his being put to a lingering and cruel death—the fool who keeps gossiping every week in the year, penny-a-line-wise, with a gawky face and a mawkish mind, about God’s creatures to whom reason has been denied, but instinct given, in order that they may be happy on moor and mountain, in the hedge-roots and on the tops of heaven-kissing trees—by the side of rills whose sweet low voice gives no echo in the wild, and on the hollow thunder of seas on which they sit in safety around the sinking ship, or from all her shrieks flee away to some island and are at rest.

Turn to the true Ornithologist, and how beautiful, each in the adaptation of its own structure to its own life, every bird that walks the land, wades the water, or skims the air! In his pages, pictured by pen or pencil, all is wondrous—as nature ever is to

“The quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on its own heart,”

even while gazing on the inferior creatures of that creation to which we belong, and are linked in being’s mysterious chain—till our breath, like theirs, expire. All is wondrous—but nothing monstrous in his delineations—for the more we know of nature in her infinite varieties, her laws reveal themselves to us in more majestic simplicity, and we are inspired

with awe, solemn but sweet, by the incomprehensible, yet in part comprehended, magnificence of Truth. The writings of such men are the gospel of nature—and if the apocrypha be bound up along with it—’tis well; for in it, too, there is felt to be inspiration—and when, in good time, purified from error, the leaves all make but one Bible.

Hark to the loud, clear, mellow, bold song of the BLACKBIRD. There he flits along upon a strong wing, with his yellow bill visible in distance, and disappears in the silent wood. Not long silent. It is a spring-day in our imagination—his clay-wall nest holds his mate at the foot of the Silver-fir, and he is now perched on its pinnacle. That thrilling hymn will go vibrating down the stem till it reaches her brooding breast. The whole vernal air is filled with the murmur and the glitter of insects; but the blackbird’s song is over all other symptoms of love and life, and seems to call upon the leaves to unfold into happiness. It is on that one Tree-top, conspicuous among many thousands on the fine breast of wood—here and there, a pine mingling not unmeetly with the prevailing oak—that the forest-minstrel sits in his inspirations. The rock above is one which we have often climbed. There lies the glorious Loch and all its islands—one dearer than the rest to eye and imagination, with its old Religious House—year after year crumbling away unheeded into more entire ruin. Far away, a sea of mountains, with all their billowing summits distinct in the sky, and now uncertain and changeful as the clouds. Yonder Castle stands well on the peninsula among the trees which the herons inhabit. Those coppice-woods on the other shore, stealing up to the heathery rocks and sprinkled birches, are the haunts of the roe. That great glen, that stretches sullenly away into the distant darkness, has been for ages the birth and the death-place of the red-deer. The cry of an Eagle! There he hangs poised in the sunlight, and now he flies off towards the sea. But again the song of our BLACKBIRD rises like “a steam of rich distilled perfumes,” and our heart comes back to him upon the pinnacle of his own Home-tree. The source of song is yet in the happy creature’s heart—but the song itself has subsided, like a rivulet that has been rejoicing in a sudden shower among the hills; the bird drops down among the balmy branches, and the other faint songs which that bold anthem had drowned, are heard at a distance, and seem to encroach every moment on the silence.

You say you greatly prefer the song of the THRUSH. Pray, why set such delightful singers by the ears? We dislike the habit that very many people have of trying every thing by a scale. Nothing seems to them to be good positively—only relatively. Now, it is true wisdom to be charmed with what is charming, to live in it for the time being, and compare the emotion with no former emotion whatever—unless it be unconsciously in the working of an imagination set agoing by delight. Although, therefore, we cannot say that we prefer the Thrush to the Blackbird, yet we agree with you in thinking him a most delightful

bird. Where a Thrush is, we defy you to anticipate his song in the morning. He is indeed an early riser. By the way, Chanticleer is far from being so. You hear him crowing away from shortly after midnight, and, in your simplicity, may suppose him to be up and strutting about the premises. Far from it;—he is at that very moment perched in his polygamy, between two of his fattest wives. The sultan will perhaps not stir a foot for several hours to come; while all the time the Thrush, having long ago rubbed his eyes, is on his topmost twig, broad awake, and charming the ear of dawn with his beautiful vociferation. During mid-day he disappears, and is mute; but again, at dewy even, as at dewy morn, he pours his pipe like a prodigal, nor ceases sometimes when night has brought the moon and stars.

Best beloved, and most beautiful of all Thrushes that ever broke from the blue-spotted shell!—thou who, for five springs, hast “hung thy procereant cradle” among the roses and honeysuckles, and ivy, and clematis that embower in bloom the lattice of our Cottage-study—how farrest thou now in the snow? Consider the whole place as your own, my dear bird; and remember, that when the gardener’s children sprinkle food for you and yours all along your favourite haunts, that it is done by our orders. And when all the earth is green again, and all the sky blue, you will welcome us to our rural domicile, with light feet running before us among the winter leaves, and then skim away to your new nest in the old spot, then about to be somewhat more cheerful in the undisturbing din of the human life within the flowery walls.

Nay—how can we forget what is for ever before our eyes! Blessed be Thou—on thy shadowy bed, belonging equally to earth and heaven—O Isle! who art called the Beautiful! and who of thyself canst make all the Lake one floating Paradise—even were her shore-hills silvan no more—groveless the bases of all her remoter mountains—effaced that loveliest splendour, sun-painted on their sky-piercing cliffs. And can it be that we have forsaken Thee! Fairy-land and Love-land of our youth! Hath imagination left our brain, and passion our heart, so that we can bear banishment from Thee and yet endure life! Such loss not yet is ours—witness these gushing tears. But Duty, “stern daughter of the voice of God,” dooms us to breathe our morning and evening orisons far from hearing and sight of Thee, whose music and whose light continue gladdening other ears and other eyes—as if ours had there never listened—and never gazed. As if thy worshipper—and sun! moon! and stars! he asks ye if he loved not you and your images—as if thy worshipper—O Windermere! were—dead! And does duty dispense no reward to them who sacrifice at her bidding what was once the very soul of life? Yes! an exceeding great reward—ample as the heart’s desire—for contentment is born of obedience—where no repinings are, the wings of thought are impeded beyond the power of the eagle’s plumes; and happy are we now—with the human smiles and voices we love even more than

thine, thou fairest region of nature! happier than when we rippled in our pinnace through the billowy moonlight—than when we sat alone on the mountain within the thunder-cloud.

Why do the songs of the Blackbird and Thrush make us think of the songless STARLING? It matters not. We do think of him, and see him too—a loveable bird, and his abode is majestic. What an object of wonder and awe is an old Castle to a boyish imagination! Its height how dreadful! up to whose mouldering edges his fear carries him, and hangs him over the battlements! What beauty in those unapproachable wall-flowers, that cast a brightness on the old brown stones of the edifice, and make the horror pleasing? That sound so far below, is the sound of a stream the eye cannot reach—of a waterfall echoing for ever among the black rocks and pools. The school-boy knows but little of the history of the old Castle—but that little is of war, and witchcraft, and imprisonment, and bloodshed. The ghostly glimmer of antiquity appals him—he visits the ruin only with a companion, and at mid-day. There and then it was that we first saw a Starling. We heard something wild and wonderful in their harsh scream, as they sat upon the edge of the battlements, or flew out of the chinks and crannies. There were Martens too, so different in their looks from the pretty House-Swallows—Jack-daws clamouring afresh at every time we waved our caps, or vainly slung a pebble towards their nests—and one grove of elms, to whose top, much lower than the castle, came, ever and anon, some noiseless Heron from the Muirs.

Ruins! Among all the external objects of imagination, surely they are most affecting! Some sumptuous edifice of a former age, still standing in its undecayed strength, has undoubtedly a great command over us, from the ages that have flowed over it; but the mouldering edifice which Nature has begun to win to herself, and to dissolve into her own bosom, is far more touching to the heart, and more awakening to the spirit. It is beautiful in its decay—not merely because green leaves, and wild flowers, and creeping mosses soften its rugged frowns, but because they have sown themselves on the decay of greatness; they are monitors to our fancy, like the flowers on a grave, of the untroubled rest of the dead. Battlements riven by the hand of time, and cloistered arches reft and rent, speak to us of the warfare and of the piety of our ancestors, of the pride of their might, and the consolations of their sorrow: they revive dim shadows of departed life, evoked from the land of forgetfulness; but they touch us more deeply when the brightness which the sun flings on the broken arches, and the warbling of birds that are nestled in the chambers of princes, and the moaning of winds through the crevices of towers, round which the surges of war were shattered and driven back, lay those phantoms again to rest in their silent bed, and show us, in the monuments of human life and power, the visible footsteps of Time and Oblivion coming on in their everlasting and irresistible career, to sweep down our perishable race, and to reduce all the forms of our momentary

being into the undistinguishable elements of their original nothing.

What is there below the skies like the place of mighty and departed cities? the vanishing or vanished capitals of renowned empires? There is no other such desolation. The solitudes of nature may be wild and drear, but they are not like the solitude from which human glory is swept away. The overthrow or decay of mighty human power is, of all thoughts that can enter the mind, the most overwhelming. The whole imagination is at once stirred by the prostration of that, round which so many high associations have been collected for so many ages. Beauty seems born but to perish, and its fragility is seen and felt to be inherent in it by a law of its being. But power gives stability, as it were, to human thought, and we forget our own perishable nature in the spectacle of some abiding and enduring greatness. Our own little span of years—our own confined region of space—are lost in the endurance and far-spread dominion of some mighty state, and we feel as if we partook of its deep-set and triumphant strength. When, therefore, a great and ancient empire falls into pieces, or when fragments of its power are heard rent asunder, like column after column disparting from some noble edifice, in sad conviction, we feel as if all the cities of men were built on foundations beneath which the earthquake sleeps. The same doom seems to be imminent over all the other kingdoms that still stand; and in the midst of such changes, and decays, and overthrows—or as we read of them of old—we look, under such emotions, on all power as foundationless, and in our wide imagination embrace empires covered only with the ruins of their desolation. Yet such is the pride of the human spirit, that it often unconsciously, under the influence of such imagination, strives to hide from itself the utter nothingness of its mightiest works. And when all its glories are visibly crumbling into dust, it creates some imaginary power to overthrow the fabrics of human greatness—and thus attempts to derive a kind of mournful triumph even in its very fall. Thus, when nations have faded away in their sins and vices, rotten at the heart and palsied in all their limbs, we strive not to think of that sad internal decay, but imagine some mighty power smiting empires and cutting short the records of mortal magnificence. Thus, Faith and Destiny are said in our imagination to lay our glories low. Thus, even the calm and silent air of Oblivion has been thought of as an unsparing Power. Time, too, though in moral sadness wisely called a shadow, has been clothed with terrific attributes, and the sweep of his scythe has shorn the towery diadem of cities. Thus the mere sigh in which we expire, has been changed into active power—and all the nations have with one voice called out "Death!" And while mankind have sunk, and fallen, and disappeared in the helplessness of their own mortal being, we have still spoken of powers arrayed against them—powers that are in good truth only another name for their own weaknesses. Thus imagination is for ever fighting against truth—and even when humbled, her

visions are sublime—conscious even amongst saddest ruin of her own immortality.

Higher and higher than ever rose the tower of Belus, uplifted by ecstasy, soars the Lark, the lyrical poet of the sky. Listen, listen! and the more remote the bird the louder seems his hymn in heaven. He seems, in such altitude, to have left the earth for ever, and to have forgotten his lowly nest. The primroses and the daisies, and all the sweet hill-flowers, must be unremembered in that lofty region of light. But just as the Lark is lost—he and his song together—as if his orisons had been accepted—both are seen and heard fondly wavering earthwards, and in a little while he is walking with his graceful crest contented along the furrows of the braided corn, or on the clover lea that in man's memory has not felt the ploughshare; or after a pause, in which he seems dallying with a home-sick passion, dropping down like one dead, beside his mate in her shallow nest.

Of all birds to whom is given dominion over the air, the Lark alone lets loose the power that is in his wings only for the expression of love and gratitude. The eagle sweeps in passion of hunger—poised in the sky his ken is searching for prey on sea or sward—his flight is ever animated by destruction. The dove seems still to be escaping from something that pursues—afraid of enemies even in the dangerless solitudes where the old forests repose in primeval peace. The heron, high over houseless moors, seems at dusk fearful in her laborious flight, and weariedly gathers her long wings on the tree-top, as if thankful that day is done, and night again ready with its rest. "The blackening trains o' craws to their repose" is an image that affects the heart of "mortal man who liveth here by toil," through sympathy with creatures partaking with him a common lot. The swallow, for ever on the wing, and wheeling fitfully before fancy's eyes in element adapted for perpetual pastime, is flying but to feed—for lack of insects prepares to forsake the land of its nativity, and yearns for the blast to bear it across the sea. Thou alone, O Lark! hast wings given thee that thou mayest be perfectly happy—none other bird but thou can at once soar and sing—and heavenward thou seemest to be borne, not more by those twinkling pinions than by the ever-varying, ever-deepening melody effusing from thy heart.

How imagination unifies! then most intensive when working with and in the heart. Who thinks, when profoundly listening with his eyes shut to the warbling air, that there is another lark in creation? The lark—sole as the season—or the rainbow. We can fancy he sings to charm our own particular ear—to please us descends into silence—for our sakes erects his crest as he walks confidently near our feet. Not till the dream-circle, of which ourselves are the centre, dissolves or subsides, do the fairest sights and sweetest sounds in nature lose their relationship to us the beholder and hearer, and relapse into the common property of all our kind. To self appertains the whole sensuous as well as the whole spiritual world. Egoism is the creator of all beauty

and all bliss, of all hope and of all faith. Even thus doth imagination unify Sabbath worship. All our beloved Scotland is to the devout breast on that day one House of God. Each congregation—however far apart—hears but one hymn—sympathy with all is an all-comprehensive self—and Christian love of our brethren is evolved from the conviction that we have ourselves a soul to be saved or lost.

Yet, methinks, imagination loveth just as well to pursue an opposite process, and to furnish food to the heart in separate picture after separate picture, one and all imbued not with the same but congenial sentiment, and therefore succeeding one another at her will, be her will intimated by mild bidding or imperial command. In such mood imagination, in still series, visions a thousand parish-kirks, each with its own characteristic localities, Sabbath-sanctified; distributes the beauty of that hallowed day in allotments all over the happy land—so that in one Sabbath there are a thousand Sabbaths.

Keep caroling, then, altogether, ye countless Larks, till heaven is one hymn! Imagination thinks she sees each particular field that sends up its own singer to the sky—that the spot of each particular nest. And of the many hearts all over loveliest Scotland in the sweet vernal season a-listening your lays, she is with the quiet beatings of the happy, with the tumult in them that would wish to break! The little maiden by the well in the brae-side above the cottage, with the Bible on her knees, left in tendance of an infant—the palsied crone placed safely in the sunshine till after service—the sickly student meditating in the shade, and somewhat sadly thinking that these spring flowers are the last his eyes may see—lovers walking together on the Sabbath before their marriage to the house of God—life-wearied wanderers without a home—remorseful men touched by the innocent happiness they cannot help hearing in heaven—the skeptic—the unbeliever—the atheist to whom “hope comes not that comes to all.” What different meanings to such different auditors hath the same music at the same moment filling the same sky!

Does the Lark ever sing in winter? Ay, sometimes January is visited with a May-day hour; and in the genial glimpse, though the earth be yet barer than the sky, the Lark, mute for months, feels called on by the sun to sing, not so near to heaven's gate, and a shorter than vernal lyric, or during that sweetest season when neither he nor you can say whether it is summer or but spring. Unmated yet, nor of mate solicitous, in pure joy of heart he cannot refrain from ascent and song; but the snow-clouds look cold, and ere he has mounted as high again as the church-spire, the aimless impulse dies, and he comes wavering down silently to the yet unprimrosed brae.

In our boyish days, we never felt that the Spring had really come till the clear-singing Lark went careering before our gladdened eyes away up to heaven. Then all the earth wore a vernal look, and the ringing sky said, “winter is over and gone.” As we roamed, on a holiday, over the wide pastoral moors, to angle in the lochs and pools, unless the day were

very cloudy the song of some lark or other was still warbling aloft, and made a part of our happiness. The creature could not have been more joyful in the skies than we were on the greensward. We, too, had our wings, and flew through our holiday. Thou soul of glee! who still leddest our flight in all our pastimes—representative child of Erin!—wildest of the wild—brightest of the bright—boldest of the bold!—the lark-loved vales in their stillness were no home for thee. The green glens of ocean, created by swelling and subsiding storms, or by calms around thy ship transformed into immeasurable plains, they filled thy fancy with images dominant over the memories of the steadfast earth. The petrel and the halcyon were the birds the sailor loved, and he forgot the songs of the inland woods in the moanings that haunt the very heart of the tumultuous sea. Of that ship nothing was ever known but that she perished. He, too, the grave and thoughtful English boy, whose exquisite scholarship we all so enthusiastically admired, without one single particle of hopeless envy—and who accompanied us on all our wildest expeditions, rather from affection to his playmates than any love of their sports—he who, timid and unadventurous as he seemed to be, yet rescued little Marian of the Brae from a drowning death when so many grown-up men stood aloof in selfish fear—gone, too, for ever art thou, our beloved Edward Harrington! and, after a few brilliant years in the oriental clime,

—“on Hoegley's banks afar,
Looks down on thy lone tomb the Evening Star.”

How genius shone o'er thy fine features, yet how pale thou ever wast! thou who sat'st then by the Sailor's side, and listened to his sallies with a mournful smile—friend! dearest to our soul! loving us far better than we deserved; for though faultless thou, yet tolerant of all our frailties—and in those days of hope from thy lips how elevating was praise! Yet how seldom do we think of thee! For months—years—not at all—not once—sometimes not even when by some chance we hear your name! It meets our eyes written on books that once belonged to you and that you gave us—and yet of yourself it recalls no image. Yet we sank down to the floor on hearing thou wast dead—ungrateful to thy memory for many years we were not—but it faded away till we forgot thee utterly, except when sleep showed thy grave!

Methinks we hear the song of the GRAY LINTIE, the darling bird of Scotland. None other is more tenderly sung of in our old ballads. When the simple and fervent love-poets of our pastoral times first applied to the maiden the words, “my bonnie burdie,” they must have been thinking of the Gray Lintie—its plumage ungauzy and soberly pure—its shape elegant yet unobtrusive—and its song various without any effort—now rich, gay, sprightly, but never rude nor riotous—now tender, almost mournful, but never gloomy or desponding. So, too, are all its habits, endearing and delightful. It is social, yet not averse to solitude, singing often in groups, and as often by itself in the

furze brake, or on the briery knoll. You often find the lintie's nest in the most solitary places—in some small self-sown clump of trees by the brink of a wild hill-stream, or on the tangled edge of a forest; and just as often you find it in the hedgerow of the cottage garden or in a bower within, or even in an old gooseberry bush that has grown into a sort of tree.

One wild and beautiful place we well remember—ay, the very bush in which we first found a gray lintie's nest—for in our parish, from some cause or other, it was rather a rarish bird. That far-away day is as distinct as the present now. Imagine, friend, first, a little well surrounded with wild cresses on the moor; something like a rivulet flows from it, or rather you see a deep tinge of verdure, the line of which, you believe, must be produced by the oozing moisture—you follow it, and by and by there is a descent palpable to your feet—then you find yourself between low broomy knolls, that, heightening every step, become erelong banks, and braes, and hills. You are surprised now to see a stream, and look round for its source—and there seem now to be a hundred small sources in fissures and spring on every side—you hear the murmurs of its course over beds of sand and gravel—and hark, a waterfall! A tree or two begins to shake its tresses on the horizon—a birch or a rowan. You get ready your angle—and by the time you have panniered three dozen, you are at a wooden bridge—you fish the pool above it with the delicate dexterity of a Boaz, capture the monarch of the flood, and on lifting your eyes from his starry side as he gasps his last on the silvery shore, you behold a Cottage, at one gable-end an ash, at the other a sycamore, and standing perhaps at the lonely door, a maiden like a fairy or an angel.

This is the Age of Confessions; and why, therefore, may we not make a confession of first-love? We had finished our sixteenth year—and we were almost as tall as we are now; for our figure was then straight as an arrow, and almost like an arrow in its flight. We had given over bird-nesting—but we had not ceased to visit the dell where first we found the Gray Lintie's brood. Tale-writers are told by critics to remember that the young shepherdesses of Scotland are not beautiful as the fiction of a poet's dream. But she was beautiful beyond poetry. She was so then, when passion and imagination were young—and her image, her undying, unfading image, is so now, when passion and imagination are old, and when from eye and soul have disappeared much of the beauty and glory both of nature and life. We loved her from the first moment that our eyes met—and we see their light at this moment—the same soft, burning light, that set body and soul on fire. She was but a poor shepherd's daughter; but what was that to us, when we heard her voice singing one of her old plaintive ballads among the braes?—When we sat down beside her—when the same plaid was drawn over our shoulders in the rain-storm—when we asked her for a kiss, and was not refused—for what had she to fear in her beauty, and her innocence, and her filial piety?—and were we not a mere boy, in the bliss of passion,

ignorant of deceit or dishonour, and with a heart open to the eyes of all as to the gates of heaven? What music was in that stream! Could "Sabeau odours from the spicy shores of Araby the Blest" so penetrate our soul, as that breath, balmier than the broom on which we sat, forgetful of all other human life! Father, mother, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts, and cousins, and all the tribe of friends that would throw us off—if we should be so base and mad as to marry a low-born, low-bread, ignorant, uneducated, crafty, ay, crafty and designing beggar—were all forgotten in our delirium—if indeed it were delirium—and not an everlastingly-sacred devotion to nature and to truth. For in what were we deluded? A voice—a faint and dewy voice—deadened by the earth that fills up her grave, and by the turf that, at this very hour, is expanding its primroses to the dew of heaven—answers, "In nothing!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" exclaims some reader in derision. "Here's an attempt at the pathetic!—a miserable attempt indeed; for who cares about the death of a mean hut girl?—we are sick of low life." Why, as to that matter, who cares for the death of any one mortal being? Who weeps for the death of the late Emperor of all the Russias? Who wept over Napoleon the Great? When Chatham or Burke, Pitt or Fox died—don't pretend to tell lies about a nation's tears. And if yourself, who, perhaps, are not in low life, were to die in half an hour, (don't be alarmed,) all who knew you—except two or three of your bosom friends, who, partly from being somewhat dull, and partly from wishing to be decent, might whine—would walk along George's Street, at the fashionable hour of three, the very day after your funeral. Nor would it ever enter their heads to abstain from a dinner at the Club, ordered perhaps by yourself a fortnight ago, at which time you were in rude health, merely because you had foolishly allowed a cold to fasten upon your lungs, and carry you off in the prime and promise of your professional life. In spite of all your critical slang, therefore, Mr. Editor, or Master Contributor to some Literary Journal, she, though a poor *Scottish Herd*, was most beautiful; and when, but a week after taking farewell of her, we went, according to our tryst, to fold her in our arms, and was told by her father that she was dead,—ay, dead—that she had no existence—that she was in a coffin,—when we awoke from the dead-fit in which we had lain on the floor of that cottage, and saw her in her grave-clothes within an hour to be buried—when we stood at her burial—and knew that never more were we or the day to behold her presence—we learned then how immeasurably misery can surpass happiness—that the soul is ignorant of its own being, till all at once a thunder-stone plunges down its depths, and groans gurgles upwards upbraiding Heaven.

How easily can the heart change its mood from the awful to the solemn—from the solemn to the sweet—and from the sweet to the gay—while the mirth of this careless moment is unconsciously tempered by the influence of that holy hour that has subsided but not died, and

continues to colour the most ordinary emotion, as the common things of earth look all lovelier in imbedded light, even after the serene moon that had yielded it is no more visible in her place! Most gentle are such transitions in the calm of nature and of the heart; all true poetry is full of them; and in music how pleasant are they or how affecting! Those alternations of tears and smiles, of fervent aspirations and of quiet thoughts! The organ and the *Æolian* harp! As the one has ceased pealing praise, we can list the other whispering it—nor feels the soul any loss of emotion in the change—still true to itself and its wondrous nature—just as it is so when from the sunset clouds it turns its eyes to admire the beauty of a dew-drop or an insect's wing.

Now, we hear many of our readers crying out against the barbarity of confining the free denizens of the air in wire or wicker Cages. Gentle readers, do, we pray, keep your compassion for other objects. Or, if you are disposed to be argumentative with us, let us just walk down-stairs to the larder, and tell the public truly what we there behold—three brace of partridges, two ditto of moorfowl, a cock pheasant, poor fellow,—a man and his wife of the aquatic or duck kind, and a woodcock, vainly presenting his long Christmas bill—

"Some sleeping kill'd—
All murder'd."

Why, you are indeed a most logical reasoner, and a most considerate Christian, when you launch out into an invective against the cruelty exhibited in our Cages. Let us leave this den of murder, and have a glass of our home-made frontignac in our own Sanctum. Come, come, sir—look on this newly-married couple of CANARIES.—The architecture of their nest is certainly not of the florid order, but my Lady Yellowlegs sits on it a well-satisfied bride. Come back in a day or two, and you will see her nursing triplets. Meanwhile, hear the ear-piercing fife of the bridegroom!—Where will you find a set of happier people, unless perhaps it be in our parlour, or our library, or our nursery? For, to tell you the truth, there is a cage or two in almost every room of the house. Where is the cruelty—here, or in your blood-stained larder? But you must eat, you reply. We answer—not necessarily birds. The question is about birds—cruelty to birds; and were that sagacious old wild-geese, whom one single moment of heedlessness brought last Wednesday to your hospitable board, at this moment alive, to bear a part in our conversation, can you dream that, with all your ingenuity and eloquence, you could persuade him—the now defunct and dissected—that you had been under the painful necessity of eating him with stuffing and apple-sauce?

It is not in nature that an ornithologist should be cruel—he is most humane. Mere skin-stuffers are not ornithologists—and we have known more than one of that tribe who would have had no scruple in strangling their own mothers, or reputed fathers. Yet if your true ornithologist cannot catch a poor dear bird alive, he must kill it—and leave you to weep for its death. There must be a few victims out of myriads of millions—and thousands

and tens of thousands are few; but the ornithologist knows the seasons when death is least afflictive—he is merciful in his wisdom—for the spirit of knowledge is gentle—and "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," reconcile him to the fluttering and ruffled plumage blood-stained by death. 'Tis hard, for example, to be obliged to shoot a Zenaida dove! Yet a Zenaida dove must die for Audubon's Illustrations. How many has he loved in life, and tenderly preserved! And how many more pigeons of all sorts, cooked in all styles, have you devoured—ay twenty for his one—you being a glutton and epicure in the same inhuman form, and he being contented at all times with the plainest fare—a salad perhaps of water-cresses plucked from a spring in the forest glade, or a bit of pemmican, or a wafer of portable soup melted in the pot of some squatter—and shared with the admiring children before a drop has been permitted to touch his own abstemious lips.

The intelligent author of the "Treatise on British Birds" does not condescend to justify the right we claim to encage them; but he shows his genuine humanity in instructing us how to render happy and healthful their imprisonment. He says very prettily, "What are town gardens and shrubberies in squares, but an attempt to ruralize the city? So strong is the desire in man to participate in country pleasures, that he tries to bring some of them even to his room. Plants and birds are sought, after with avidity, and cherished with delight. With flowers he endeavours to make his apartments resemble a garden; and thinks of groves and fields, as he listens to the wild sweet melody of his little captives. Those who keep and take an interest in song-birds, are often at a loss how to treat their little warblers during illness, or to prepare the proper food best suited to their various constitutions; but that knowledge is absolutely necessary to preserve these little creatures in health; for want of it, young amateurs and bird-fanciers have often seen, with regret, many of their favourite birds perish."

Now, here we confess is a good physician. In Edinburgh we understand there are about five hundred medical practitioners on the human race—and we have dog-doctors and horse-doctors, who come out in numbers—but we have no bird-doctors. Yet often, too often, when the whole house rings, from garret to cellar, with the cries of children teething, or in the whooping-cough, the little linnet sits silent on his perch, a moping bunch of feathers, and then falls down dead, when his liling life might have been saved by the simplest medicinal food skilfully administered. Surely if we have physicians to attend our treadmills, and regulate the diet and day's work of merciless ruffians, we should not suffer our innocent and useful prisoners thus to die unattended. Why do not the Ladies of Edinburgh form themselves into a Society for this purpose?

Not one of all the philosophers in the world has been able to tell us what is happiness. Sterne's Starling is weakly supposed to have been miserable. Probably he was one of the most contented birds in the universe. Does

confinement—the closest, most unaccompanied confinement—make one of ourselves unhappy? Is the shoemaker, sitting with his head on his knees, in a hole in the wall from morning to night, in any respect to be pitied? Is the solitary orphan, that sits all day sewing in a garret, while the old woman for whom she works is out washing, an object of compassion? or the widow of fourscore, hunkling over the embers, with a stump of a pipe in her toothless mouth? Is it so sad a thing indeed to be alone? or to have one's motions circumscribed within the narrowest imaginable limits? Nonsense all!

Then, gentle reader, were you ever in a Highland shieling? Often since you read our *Recreations*. It is built of turf, and is literally alive; for the beautiful heather is blooming, wild-flowers and walls and roof are one sound of bees. The industrious little creatures must have come several long miles for their balmy spoil. There is but one human creature in that shieling, but he is not at all solitary. He no more wearies of that lonesome place than do the sunbeams or the shadows. To himself alone he chaunts his old Gaelic songs, or frames wild ditties of his own to the raven or the red-deer. Months thus pass on; and he descends again to the lower country. Perhaps he goes to the wars—fights—bleeds—and returns to Badenoch or Lochaber; and once more, blending in his imagination the battles of his own regiment, in Egypt, Spain, or Flanders, with the deeds done of yore by Ossian sung, sits contented by the door of the same shieling, restored and beautified, in which he had dreamt away the summers of his youth.

What has become—we wonder—of Dartmoor Prison? During that long war its huge and hideous bulk was filled with Frenchmen—ay—

“Men of all climes—attach'd to none—were there;”

—a desperate race—robbers and reavers, and ruffians and rapers, and pirates and murderers mingled with the heroes who, fired by freedom, had fought for the land of lilies, with its vine-vales and “hills of sweet myrtle”—doomed to die in captivity, immured in that doleful mansion on the sullen moor. There thousands pined and wore away and wasted—and when not another groan remained within the bones of their breasts, they gave up the ghost. Young heroes prematurely old in baffled passions—life's best and strongest passions, that scorned to go to sleep but in the sleep of death. These died in their golden prime. With them went down into unpitied and unhonoured graves—for pity and honour dwell not in houses so haunted—veterans in their iron age—some self-smitten with ghastly wounds that let life finally bubble out of sinewy neck or shaggy bosom—or the poison-bowl convulsed their giant limbs unto unquivering rest. Yet there you saw a wild strange tumult of troubled happiness—which, as you looked into his heart, was transfigured into misery. Their volatile spirits fluttered in their cage, like birds that seem not to hate nor to be happy in confinement, but, hanging by beak or claws, to be often playing with the glittering wires—to be amus-

ing themselves, so it seems, with drawing up, by small enginery, their food and drink, which soon sickens, however, on their stomachs, till, with ruffled plumage, they are often found in the morning lying on their backs, with clenched feet, and neck bent as if twisted, on the scribbled sand, stone-dead. There you saw pale youths—boys almost like girls, so delicate looked they in that hot infected air which ventilate it as you will, is never felt to breathe on the face like the fresh air of liberty—once bold and bright midshipmen in frigate or first-rater, and saved by being picked up by the boats of the ship that had sunk her by one double-shotted broadside, or sent her in one explosion splintering into the sky, and splashing into the sea, in less than a minute the thunder silent, and the fiery shower over and gone—there you saw such lads as these, who used almost to weep if they got not duly the dear-desired letter from sister or sweetheart, and when they did duly get it, opened it with trembling fingers, and even then let drop some natural tears—there we saw them leaping and dancing, with gross gesticulations and horrid oaths obscene, with grim outcasts from nature, whose mustached mouths were rank with sin and pollution—monsters for whom hell was yawning—their mortal mire already possessed with a demon. There, wretched, wo-begone, and wearied out with recklessness and desperation, many wooed Chance and Fortune, who they hoped might yet listen to their prayers—and kept rattling the dice—cursing them that gave the indulgence—even in their cells of punishment for disobedience or mutiny. There you saw some, who in the crowded courts “sat apart retired,”—bringing the practised skill that once supported, or the native genius that once adorned life, to bear on beautiful contrivances and fancies elaborately executed with meanest instruments, till they rivalled or outdid the work of art assisted by all the ministries of science. And thus won they a poor pittance wherewithal to purchase some little comfort or luxury, or ornament to their persons; for vanity had not forsaken some in their rusty squalor, and they sought to please her, their mistress or their bride. There you saw accomplished men conjuring before their eyes, on the paper or the canvas, to feed the longings of their souls, the lights and the shadows of the dear days that far away were beautifying some sacred spot of “*la belle France*”—perhaps some festal scene, for love in sorrow is still true to remembered joy—where once with youths and maidens

“They led the dance beside the murmuring Loire.”

There you heard—and hushed then was all the hubbub—some clear silver voice, sweet almost as woman's, yet full of manhood in its depths, singing to the gay guitar, touched, though the musician was of the best and noblest blood of France, with a master's hand, “*La belle Gabrielle!*” And there might be seen, in the solitude of their own abstractions, men with minds that had sounded the profounds of science, and, seemingly undisturbed by all that clamour, pursuing the mysteries of lines and numbers—conversing with the harmonious

and lofty stars of heaven, deaf to all the discord and despair of earth. Or religious still even more than they—for those were mental, these spiritual—you beheld there men, whose heads before their time were becoming gray, meditating on their own souls, and in holy hope and humble trust in their Redeemer, if not yet prepared, perpetually preparing themselves for the world to come!

To return to Birds in Cages;—they are, when well, uniformly as happy as the day is long. What else could oblige them, whether they will or no, to burst out into song—to hop about so pleased and pert—to play such fantastic tricks, like so many whirligigs—to sleep so soundly, and to awake into a small, shrill, compressed twitter of joy at the dawn of light! So utterly mistaken was Sterne, and all the other sentimentalists, that his Starling, who he absurdly opined was wishing to get out, would not have stirred a peg had the door of his cage been flung wide open, but would have pecked like a very game-cock at the hand inserted to give him his liberty. Depend upon it that Starling had not the slightest idea of what he was saying; and had he been up to the meaning of his words, would have been shocked at his ungrateful folly. Look at Canaries, and Chaffinches, and Bullfinches, and “the rest,” how they amuse themselves for a while flitting about the room, and then, finding how dull a thing it is to be citizens of the world, bounce up to their cages, and shut the door from the inside, glad to be once more at home. Begin to whistle or sing yourself, and forthwith you have a duet or a trio. We can imagine no more perfectly tranquil and cheerful life than that of a Goldfinch in a cage in spring, with his wife and his children. All his social affections are cultivated to the utmost. He possesses many accomplishments unknown to his brethren among the trees;—he has never known what it is to want a meal in times of the greatest scarcity; and he admires the beautiful frost-work on the windows, when thousands of his feathered friends are buried in the snow, or, what is almost as bad, baked up into pies, and devoured by a large supper-party of both sexes, who fortify their flummery and flirtation by such viands, and, remorseless, swallow dozens upon dozens of the warblers of the woods.

Ay, ay, Mr. Goldy! you are wondering what we are now doing, and speculating upon the scribbler with arch eyes and elevated crest, as if you would know the subject of his lucubrations. What the wiser or better wouldst thou be of human knowledge! Sometimes that little heart of thine goes pit-a-pat, when a great ugly, staring contributor thrusts his inquisitive nose within the wires—or when a strange cat glides round and round the room, fascinating thee with the glare of his fierce fixed eyes; but what is all that to the woes of an Editor!—Yes, sweet simpleton! do you not know that we are the Editor of Blackwood’s Magazine—Christopher North! Yes, indeed, we are that very man—that selfsame much-calumniated man-monster and Ogre. There, there!—perch on our shoulder, and let us laugh together at the whole world.

SECOND CANTICLE.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE leads the van of our Birds of Prey—and there she sits in her usual carriage when in a state of rest. Her hunger and her thirst have been appeased—her wings are folded up in a dignified tranquillity—her talons, grasping a leafless branch, are almost hidden by the feathers of her breast—her sleepless eye has lost something of its ferocity—and the Royal Bird is almost serene in her solitary state on the cliff. The gorcock unalarmed crows among the moors and mosses—the blackbird whistles in the birken shaw—and the cony erects his ears at the mouth of his burrow, and whisks away frolicsome among the whins or heather.

There is no index to the hour—neither light nor shadow—no cloud. But from the composed aspect of the Bird, we may suppose it to be the hush of evening after a day of successful foray. The imps in the eyrie have been fed, and their hungry cry will not be heard till the dawn. The mother has there taken up her watchful rest, till in darkness she may glide up to her brood—the sire is somewhere sitting within her view among the rocks—a sentinel whose eye, and ear, and nostril are true, in exquisite fineness of sense, to their trust, and on whom rarely, and as if by a miracle, can steal the adventurous shepherd or huntsman, to wreak vengeance with his rifle on the spoiler of sheep-walk and forest-chase.

Yet sometimes it chanceth that the yellow lustre of her keen, wild, fierce eye is veiled, even in daylight, by the film of sleep. Perhaps sickness has been at the heart of the dejected bird, or fever wasted her wing. The sun may have smitten her, or the storm driven her against a rock. Then hunger and thirst—which, in pride of plumage she scorned, and which only made her fiercer on the edge of her unfed eyrie, as she whetted her beak on the flint-stone, and clutched the strong heather-stalks in her talons, as if she were anticipating prey—quell her courage, and in famine she eyes afar off the fowls she is unable to pursue, and with one stroke strike to earth. Her flight is heavier and heavier each succeeding day—she ventures not to cross the great glens with or without lochs—but flaps her way from rock to rock, lower and lower down along the same mountain-side—and finally, drawn by her weakness into dangerous descent, she is discovered at gray dawn far below the region of snow, assailed and insulted by the meanest carrion; till a bullet whizzing through her heart, down she topples, and soon is despatched by blows from the rifle-butt, the shepherd stretching out his foe’s carcass on the sward, eight feet from wing tip to wing tip, with leg thick as his own wrist, and foot broad as his own hand.

But behold the Golden Eagle, as she has pounced, and is exulting over her prey! With her head drawn back between the crescent of her uplifted wings, which she will not fold till that prey be devoured, eye glaring cruel joy, neck-plumage bristling, tail-feathers fan-spread, and talons driven through the victim’s entrails

and heart—there she is new-lighted on the ledge of a precipice, and fancy hears her yell and its echo. Beak and talons, all her life long, have had a stain of blood, for the murderess observes no Sabbath, and seldom dips them in loch or sea, except when dashing down suddenly among the terrified water-fowl from her watch-tower in the sky. The week-old fawn had left the doe's side but for a momentary race along the edge of the coppice; a rustle and a shadow—and the burden is borne off to the cliffs of Benevis. In an instant the small animal is dead—after a short exultation torn into pieces, and by eagles and eaglets devoured, its unswallowed or undigested bones mingle with those of many other creatures, encumbering the eyrie, and strewn around it over the bloody platform on which the young demons crawl forth to enjoy the sunshine.

Oh for the Life of an Eagle written by himself! It would outsell the Confessions even of the English Opium-Eater. Proudly would he, or she, write of birth and parentage. On the rock of ages he first opened his eyes to the sun, in noble instinct affronting and outstaring the light. The Great Glen of Scotland—hath it not been the inheritance of his ancestors for many thousand years? No polluting mixture of ignoble blood, from intermarriages of necessity or convenience with kite, buzzard, hawk, or falcon. No, the Golden Eagle of Glen-Falloch, surnamed the Sun-starers, have formed alliances with the Golden Eagles of Cruachan, Benlawers, Shehallion, and Lochnagar—the Lightning-Glints, the Flood-fallers, the Storm-wheelers, the Cloud-cleavers, ever since the deluge. The education of the autobiographer had not been intrusted to a private tutor. Parental eyes, beaks, and talons, provided sustenance for his infant frame; and in that capacious eyrie, year after year repaired by dry branches from the desert, parental advice was yelled into him, meet for the expansion of his instinct, as wide and wonderful as the reason of earth-crawling man. What a noble naturalist did he, in a single session at the College of the Cliff, become! Of the customs, and habits, and haunts of all inferior creatures, he speedily made himself master—ours included. Nor was his knowledge confined to theory, but reduced to daily practice. He kept himself in constant training—taking a flight of a couple of hundred miles before breakfast—paying a forenoon visit to the farthest of the Hebride Isles, and returning to dinner in Glenco. In one day he has flown to Norway on a visit to his uncle by the mother's side, and returned the next to comfort his paternal uncle, lying sick at the Head of the Cambrian Dee. He soon learned to despise himself for having once yelled for food, when food was none; and to sit or sail, on rock or through ether, athirst and an hungered, but mute. The virtues of patience, endurance, and fortitude, have become with him, in strict accordance with the Aristotelian Moral Philosophy—habits. A Peripatetic Philosopher he could hardly be called—properly speaking, he belongs to the Solar School—an airy sect, who take very high ground, indulge in lofty flights, and are often lost in the clouds. Now and then a light

chapter might be introduced, setting forth how he and other youngsters of the Blood Royal were wont to take an occasional game at High-Jinks, or tourney in air lists, the champions on opposite sides flying from the Perthshire and from the Argyleshire mountains, and encountering with a clash in the azure common, six thousand feet high. But the fever of love burned in his blood, and flying to the mountains of another continent, in obedience to the yell of an old oral tradition, he wooed and won his virgin bride—a monstrous beauty, wider-winged than himself, to kill or caress, and bearing the proof of her noble nativity in the radiant Iris that belongs in perfection of fierceness but to the Sun-starers, and in them is found, unimpaired by cloudiest clime, over the uttermost parts of the earth. The bridegroom and his bride, during the honey-moon, slept on the naked rock—till they had built their eyrie beneath its cliff-canopy on the mountain-brow. When the bride was “as Eagles wish to be who love their lords”—devoted unto her was the bridegroom, even as the cushat murmuring to his brooding mate in the central pine-grove of a forest. Tenderly did he drop from his talons, close beside her beak, the delicate spring lamb, or the too early leveret, owing to the hurried and imprudent marriage of its parents before March, buried in a living tomb on April's closing day. Through all thy glens, Albin! hadst thou reason to mourn, at the bursting of the shells that Queen-bird had been cherishing beneath her bosom. Aloft in heaven wheeled the Royal Pair, from rising to setting sun. Among the bright-blooming heather they espied the tartan'd shepherd, or hunter creeping like a lizard, and from behind the vain shadow of a rock watching with his rifle the flight he would fain see shorn of its beams. The flocks were thinned—and the bleating of desolate dams among the woolly people heard from many a brae. Poison was strewn over the glens for their destruction, but the Eagle, like the lion, preys not on carcasses; and the shepherd dogs howled in agony over the carrion in which they devoured death. Ha! was not that a day of triumph to the Sun-starers of Cruachan, when sky-hunting in couples, far down on the greensward before the ruined gateway of Kilchurn Castle, they saw, left all to himself in the sunshine, the infant heir of the Campbell of Breadalbane, the child of the Lord of Glenorchy and all its streams! Four talons in an instant were in his heart. Too late were the outcries from all the turrets; for ere the castle-gates were flung open, the golden head of the royal babe was lying in gore, in the Eyrie on the iron ramparts of Ben Slarive—his blue eyes dug out—his rosy cheeks torn—and his brains dropping from beaks that revelled yelling within the skull!—Such are a few hints for “Some Passages in the Life of the Golden Eagle, written by Himself,”—in one volume crown octavo—Blackwoods, Edinburgh and London.

O heavens and earth!—forests and barnyards! what a difference with a distinction between a GOLDEN EAGLE and a GREEN GOOSE! There, all neck and bottom, splay-footed, and hissing in miserable imitation of a serpent,

lolling from side to side, up and down like an ill-trimmed punt, the downy gosling waddles through the green mire, and, imagining that King George the Fourth is meditating mischief against him, cackles angrily as he plunges into the pond. No swan that "on still St. Mary's lake floats double, swan and shadow," so proud as he! He prides himself on being a gander, and never forgets the lesson instilled into him by his parents, soon as he chipt the shell in the nest among the nettles, that his ancestors saved the Roman Capitol. In process of time, in company with swine, he grazes on the common, and insults the Egyptians in their roving camp. Then comes the season of plucking—and this very pen bears testimony to his tortures. Out into the houseless winter is he driven—and, if he escapes being frozen into a lump of fat ice, he is crammed till his liver swells into a four-pounder—his cerebellum is cut by the cruel knife of a phrenological cook, and his remains buried with a cerement of apple sauce in the paunches of apoplectic aldermen, eating against each other at a civic feast! Such are a few hints for "Some Passages in the Life of a Green Goose," written by himself—in foolscap octavo—published by Quack and Co., Ludgate Lane, and sold by all booksellers in town and country.

Poor poets must not meddle with eagles. In the *Fall of Nineveh*, Mr. Atherstone describes a grand review of his army by Sardanapalus. Two million men are put into motion by the moving of the Assyrian flag-staff in the hand of the king, who takes his station on a mount conspicuous to all the army. This flag-staff, though "tall as a mast"—Mr. Atherstone does not venture to go on to say with Milton, "hewn on Norwegian hills," or "of some tall ammiral," though the readers' minds supply the deficiency—this mast was, we are told, for "two strong men a task;" but it must have been so for twenty. To have had the least chance of being all at once seen by two million of men, it could not have been less than fifty feet high—and if Sardanapalus waved the royal standard of Assyria round his head, Samson or O'Doherty must have been a joke to him. However, we shall suppose he did; and what was the result? Such shouts arose that the solid walls of Nineveh were shook, "and the firm ground made tremble." But this was not all.

"At his height,

A speck scarce visible, the eagle heard,
And felt his strong wing falter: terror-struck,
Fluttering and wildly screaming, down he sank—
Down through the quivering air: another shout,—
His talons droop—his sunny eye grows dark—
His strengthless pennons fall—plump down he falls,
Even like a stone. Amid the far-off hills,
With eye of fire, and shaggy mane uprear'd,
The sleeping lion in his den sprang up;
Listened awhile—then laid his monstrous mouth
Close to the floor, and breath'd hot roarings out
In fierce reply."

What think ye of that, John Audubon, Charles Bonaparte, J. Prideaux Selby, James Wilson, Sir William Jardine, and ye other European and American ornithologists? Pray, Mr. Atherstone, did you ever see an eagle—a speck in the sky? 'Never again suffer yourself, oh, dear sir! to believe old women's tales

of men on earth shooting eagles with their mouths; because the thing is impossible, even had their mouthpieces had percussion-locks—had they been crammed with ammunition to the muzzle. Had a stray sparrow been fluttering in the air, he would certainly have got a fright, and probably a fall—nor would there have been any hope for a tom-tit. But an eagle—an eagle ever so many thousand feet aloft—poo, poo!—he would merely have muted on the roaring multitude, and given Sardanapalus an additional epaulette. Why, had a string of wild-geese at the time been warping their way on the wind, they would merely have shot the wedge firmer and sharper into the air, and answered the earth-born shout with an air-born gabble—clangour to clangour. Where were Mr. Atherstone's powers of ratiocination, and all his acoustics? Two shouts slew an eagle. What became of all the other denizens of air—especially crows, ravens, and vultures, who, seeing two millions of men, must have come flocking against a day of battle? Every mother's son of them must have gone to pot. Then what scrambling among the allied troops! And what was one eagle doing by himself "up-by yonder?" Was he the only eagle in Assyria—the secular bird of ages? Who was looking at him, first a speck—then faltering—then fluttering and wildly screaming—then plump down like a stone? Mr. Atherstone talks as if he saw it. In the circumstances he had no business with his "sunny eye growing dark." That is entering too much into the medical, or rather anatomical symptoms of his apoplexy, and would be better for a medical journal than an epic poem. But to be done with it—two shouts that slew an eagle a mile up the sky, must have cracked all the tympana of the two million shouters. The entire army must have become as deaf as a post. Nay, Sardanapalus himself, on the mount, must have been blown into the air as by the explosion of a range of gunpowder-mills; the campaign taken a new turn; and a revolution been brought about, of which, at this distance of place and time, it is not easy for us to conjecture what might have been the fundamental features on which it would have hinged—and thus an entirely new aspect given to all the histories of the world.

What is said about the lion, is to our minds equally picturesque and absurd. He was among the "far-off hills." How far, pray? Twenty miles? If so then, without a silver ear-trumpet he could not have heard the huzzas. If the far-off hills were so near Nineveh as to allow the lion to hear the huzzas even in his sleep, the epithet "far-off" should be altered, and the lion himself brought from the interior. But we cannot believe that lions were permitted to live in dens within ear-shot of Nineveh. Nimrod had taught them "never to come there no more"—and Semiramis looked sharp after the suburbs. But, not to insist unduly upon a mere matter of police, is it the nature of lions, lying in their dens among far-off hills, to start up from their sleep, and "breathe hot roarings out" in fierce reply to the shouts of armies? All stuff! Mr. Atherstone shows off his knowledge of natural his-

tory, in telling us that the said lion, in roaring, "laid his monstrous mouth close to the floor." We believe he does so; but did Mr. Atherstone learn the fact from Cuvier or from Wombwell? It is always dangerous to a poet to be too picturesque; and in this case, you are made, whether you will or no, to see an old, red, lean, mangy monster, called a lion, in his unhappy den in a menagerie, bathing his beard in the saw-dust, and from his toothless jaws "breathing hot roarings out," to the terror of servant-girls and children, in fierce reply to a man in a hairy cap and full suit of velvet, stirring him up with a long pole, and denominating him by the sacred name of the great asserter of Scottish independence.

Sir Humphry Davy—in his own science the first man of his age—does not shine in his "Salmonia"—pleasant volume though it be—as an ornithologist. Let us see.

"POET.—The scenery improves as we advance nearer the lower parts of the lake. The mountains become higher, and that small island or peninsula presents a bold craggy outline; and the birch-wood below it, and the pines above, make a scene somewhat Alpine in character. But what is that large bird soaring above the pointed rock, towards the end of the lake? Surely it is an eagle!

"HAL.—You are right; it is an eagle, and of a rare and peculiar species—the gray or silver eagle, a noble bird! From the size of the animal, it must be the female; and her eyrie is that high rock. I dare say the male is not far off."

Sir Humphry speaks in his introductory pages of Mr. Wordsworth as a lover of fishing and fishermen; and we cannot help thinking and feeling that he intends Poietes as an image of that great Poet. What! William Wordsworth, the very high-priest of nature, represented to have seen an eagle for the first time in his life only then, and to have boldly ventured on a conjecture that such was the name and nature of the bird! "But what is that large bird soaring above the pointed rock, towards the end of the lake? Surely it is an eagle!" "Yes, you are right—it is an eagle." Ha—ha—ha—ha—ha—ha! Sir Humphry—Sir Humphry—that guffaw was not ours—it came from the Bard of Rydal—albeit unused to the laughing mood—in the haunted twilight of that beautiful—that solemn Terrace.

Poietes having been confirmed, by the authority of Halius, in his belief that the bird is an eagle, exclaims, agreeably to the part he plays, "Look at the bird! She dashes into the water, *falling like a rock* and raising a column of spray—she has *fallen from a great height*. And now she rises again into the air—*what an extraordinary sight!*" Nothing is so annoying as to be ordered to look at a sight which, unless you shut your eyes, it is impossible for you not to see. A person behaving in a boat like Poietes, deserved being flung overboard. "Look at the bird!" Why, every eye was already upon her; and if Poietes had had a single spark of poetry in his composition, he would have been struck mute by such a sight, instead of bawling out, open-mouthed and goggle-eyed, like a Cockney to a rocket at

Vauxhall. Besides, an eagle does not, when descending on her prey, fall like a rock. There is nothing like the "*vis inertia*" in her precipitation. You still see the self-willed energy of the ravenous bird, as the mass of plumes flashes in the spray—of which, by the by, there never was, nor will be, a column so raised. She is as much the queen of birds as she sinks as when she soars—her trust and her power are still seen and felt to be in her pinions, whether she shoots to or from the zenith—to a falling star she might be likened—just as any other devil—either by Milton or Wordsworth—for such a star seems to our eye and our imagination ever instinct with spirit, not to be impelled by exterior force, but to be self-shot from heaven.

Upon our word, we begin to believe that we ourselves deserve the name of Poietes much better than the gentleman who at threescore had never seen an eagle. "She has fallen from a great height," quoth the gentleman—"What an extraordinary sight!" he continueth—while we are mute as the oar suspended by the up-gazing Celt, whose quiet eye brightens as it pursues the Bird to her eyrie in the cliff over the cove where the red-deer feed.

Poietes having given vent to his emotions in such sublime exclamations—"Look at the bird!" "What an extraordinary sight!" might have thenceforth held his tongue, and said no more about eagles. But Halius cries, "There! you see her rise with a fish in her talons"—and Poietes, very simply, or rather like a simpleton, returns for answer, "She gives an interest which I hardly expected to have found in this scene. Pray, are there many of these animals in this country?" A poet hardly expecting to find interest in such a scene as a great Highland loch—Loch Maree! "Pray, are there many of these animals in this country?" Loud cries of Oh! oh! oh! No doubt an eagle is an animal; like Mr. Cobbett or Mr. O'Connell "a very fine animal;" but we particularly, and earnestly, and anxiously, request Sir Humphry Davy not to call her so again—but to use the term bird, or any other term he chooses, except animal. Animal, a living creature, is too general, too vague by far; and somehow or other it offends our ear shockingly when applied to an eagle. We may be wrong, but in a trifling matter of this kind Sir Humphry surely will not refuse our supplication. Let him call a horse an animal, if he chooses—or an ass—or a cow—but not an eagle—as he loves us, not an eagle;—let him call it a bird—the Bird of Jove—the Queen or King of the Sky—or any thing else he chooses—but not an animal—no—no—no—not an animal, as he hopes to prosper, to be praised in Maga, embalmed and immortalized.

Neither ought Poietes to have asked if there were "many of these animals" in this country. He ought to have known that there are not many of these animals in any country. Eagles are proud—apt to hold their heads very high—and to make themselves scarce. A great many eagles all flying about together would look most absurd. They are aware of that, and fly in "ones and twos"—a couple perhaps to a county. Poietes might as well have asked

Mungo Park if there were a great many lions in Africa. Mungo, we think, saw but one; and that was one too much. There were probably a few more between Sego and Timbuctoo—but there are not a “great many of those animals in that country”—though quite sufficient for the purpose. How the Romans contrived to get at hundreds for a single show, perplexes our power of conjecture.

Haliæus says—with a smile on his lip surely—in answer to the query of Poiotes—“Of this species I have seen but these two; and, I believe, the young ones migrate as soon as they can provide for themselves; for this solitary bird requires a large space to move and feed in, and does not allow its offspring to partake its reign, or to live near it.” This is all pretty true, and known to every child rising or risen six, except poor Poiotes. He had imagined that there were “many of these animals in this country,” that they all went a-fishing together as amicably as five hundred sail of Manksmen among a shoal of herrings.

Throughout these Dialogues we have observed that Ornithers rarely opens his mouth. Why so taciturn? On the subject of birds he ought, from his name, to be well informed; and how could he let slip an opportunity, such as will probably never be afforded him again in this life, of being eloquent on the Silver Eagle? Ornithology is surely the department of Ornithers. Yet there is evidently something odd and peculiar in his idiosyncrasy; for we observe that he never once alludes to “these animals,” birds, during the whole excursion. He has not taken his gun with him into the Highlands, a sad oversight indeed in a gentleman who “is to be regarded as generally fond of the sports of the field.” Flappers are plentiful over all the moors about the middle of July; and hoodies, owls, hawks, ravens, make all first-rate shooting to sportsmen not over anxious about the pot. It is to be presumed, too, that he can stuff birds. What noble specimens might he not have shot for Mr. Selby! On one occasion, “the SILVER EAGLE” is preying in a pool within slug range, and there is some talk of shooting him—we suppose with an oar, or the butt of a fishing-rod, for the party have no fire-arms—but Poiotes insists on sparing his life, because “these animals” are a picturesque accompaniment to the scenery, and “give it an interest which he had not expected to find” in mere rivers, lochs, moors, and mountains. Genus *Falco* must all the while have been laughing in his sleeve at the whole party—particularly at Ornithers—who, to judge from his general demeanour, may be a fair shot with number five at an old newspaper expanded on a barn-door twenty yards off, but never could have had the audacity to think in his most ambitious mood of letting off his gun at an Eagle.

But further, Haliæus, before he took upon him to speak so authoritatively about eagles, should have made himself master of their names and natures. He is manifestly no scientific ornithologist. We are. The general question concerning Eagles in Scotland may now be squeezed into very small compass. Exclusive of the true Osprey, (*Falco Haliæ-*

tus,) which is rather a large fishing-hawk than an eagle, there are two kinds, viz.—the GOLDEN EAGLE, (*F. Chrysaetos*;) and the WHITE-TAILED or CINNEROUS EAGLE, (*F. Albicilla*.) The other two nominal species are disposed of in the following manner:—First, the RING-TAILED EAGLE (*F. Fulvus*) is the young of the Golden Eagle, being distinguished in early life by having the basal and central portion of the tail white, which colour disappears as the bird attains the adult state. Second, the SEA EAGLE, (*F. Ossifragus*;) commonly so called, is the young of the White-tailed Eagle above named, from which it differs in having a brown tail; for in this species the white of the tail becomes every year more apparent as the bird increases in age, whereas, in the Golden Eagle, the white altogether disappears in the adult.

It is to the RING-TAILED EAGLE, and, by consequence, to the GOLDEN EAGLE, that the name of BLACK EAGLE is applied in the Highlands.

The White-tailed, or Sea Eagle, as it becomes old, attains, in addition to the pure tail, a pale or bleached appearance, from which it may merit and obtain the name of Gray or SILVER EAGLE, as Sir Humphry Davy chooses to call it; but it is not known among naturalists by that name. There is no other species, however, to which the name can apply; and, therefore, Sir Humphry has committed the very gross mistake of calling the Gray or Silver Eagle (to use his own nomenclature) a very rare Eagle, since it is the most common of all the Scots, and also—a *fortiori*—of all the English Eagles—being in fact the SEA EAGLE of the Highlands.

It preys often on fish dead or alive; but not exclusively, as it also attacks young lambs, and drives off the ravens from carrion prey, being less fastidious in its diet than the GOLDEN EAGLE, which probably kills its own meat—and has been known to carry off children; for a striking account of one of which hay-field robberies you have but a few minutes to wait.

As to its driving off its young, its habits are probably similar in this respect to other birds of prey, none of which appear to keep together in families after the young can shift for themselves; but we have never met with any one who has seen them in the act of driving. It is stated vaguely, in all books, of all eagles.

As to its requiring a large range to feed in—we have only to remark that, from the powerful flight of these birds, and the wild and barren nature of the countries which they inhabit, there can be no doubt that they fly far, and “prey in distant isles”—as Thomson has it; but Haliæus needed not have stated this circumstance as a character of this peculiar eagle—for an eagle with a small range does not exist; and therefore it is to be presumed that they require a large one.

Further, all this being the case, there seems to be no necessity for the old eagles giving themselves the trouble to drive off the young ones, who by natural instinct will fly off of their own accord, as soon as their wings can bear them over the sea. If an eagle were so partial to his native vale, as never on any account, hungry or thirsty, drunk or sober, to

venture into the next parish, why then the old people would be forced, on the old principle of self-preservation, to pack off their progeny to bed and board beyond Benevis. But an eagle is a Citizen of the World. He is friendly to the views of Mr. Huskisson on the Wool Trade, the Fisheries, and the Colonies—and acts upon the old adage,

"Every bird for himself, and God for us all!"

To conclude, for the present, this branch of our subject, we beg leave humbly to express our belief, that Sir Humphry Davy never saw the Eagle, by him called the Gray or Silver, hunting for fish in the style described in *Salmonia*. It does not dislike fish—but it is not its nature to keep hunting for them so, not in the Highlands at least, whatever it may do on American continent or isles. Sir Humphry talks of the bird dashing down repeatedly upon a pool within shot of the anglers. We have angled fifty times in the Highlands for Sir Humphry's once, but never saw nor heard of such a sight. He has read of such things, and introduced them into this dialogue for the sake of effect—all quite right to do—had his reading lain among trustworthy Ornithologists. The common Eagle—which he ignorantly, as we have seen, calls so rare—is a shy bird, as all shepherds know—and is seldom within range of the rifle. Gorged with blood, they are sometimes run in upon and felled with a staff or club. So perished, in the flower of his age, that Eagle whose feet now form handles to the bell-ropes of our Sanctum at Buchanan Lodge—and are the subject of a clever copy of verses by Mullion, entitled "All the Talons."

We said in "The Moors," that we envied not the eagle or any other bird his wings, and showed cause why we preferred our own feet. Had Puck wings? If he had, we retract, and would sport Puck.

Oberon.

"Fetch me this herb—and be thou here again,
Ere the Leviathan can swim a league."

Puck.

"I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes."

How infinitely more poetical are wings like these than seven-league boots! We declare, on our conscience, that we would not accept the present of a pair of seven-league boots to-morrow—or, if we did, it would be out of mere politeness to the genie who might press them on us, and the wisest thing we could do would be to lock them up in a drawer out of the reach of the servants. Suppose that we wished to walk from Clovenford to Innerleithen—why, with seven-league boots on, one single step would take us up to Posso, seven miles above Peebles! That would never do. By mincing one's steps, indeed, one might contrive to stop at Innerleithen; but suppose a gad-fly were to sting one's hip at the Pirn—one unintentional stride would deposit Christopher at Drummelzier, and another over the Cruik, and far away down Annan water! Therefore, there is nothing like wings. On wings you can flutter—and glide—and float and soar—now like a humming-bird among the flowers—now like a

swan, half rowing, half sailing, and half flying adown a river—now like an eagle afloat in the blue ocean of heaven, or shooting sunwards, invisible in excess of light—and bidding farewell to earth and its humble shadows. "O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!" Who hath not, in some heavy hour or other, from the depth of his very soul, devoutly—passionately—hopelessly—breathed that wish to escape beyond the limits of wo and sin—not into the world of dreamless death; for weary though the immortal pilgrim may have been, never desired he the doom of annihilation, untroubled although it be, shorn of all the attributes of being—but he has prayed for the wings of the dove, because that fair creature, as she wheeled herself away from the sight of human dwellings, has seemed to disappear to his imagination among old glimmering forests, wherein she foldeth her wing and falleth gladly asleep—and therefore, in those agitated times when the spirits of men acknowledge kindred with the inferior creatures, and would fain interchange with them powers and qualities, they are willing even to lay down their intelligence, their reason, their conscience itself, so that they could but be blessed with the faculty of escaping from all the agonies that intelligence, and reason, and conscience alone can know, and beyond the reach of this world's horizon to flee away and be at rest!

Puck says he will put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. At what rate is that per second, taking the circumference of the earth at 27,000 miles, more or less? There is a question for the mechanics, somewhat about as difficult of solution as Lord Brougham's celebrated one of the Smuggler and the Revenue Cutter—for the solution of which he recommended the aid of algebra. It is not so quick as you would imagine. We forget the usual rate of a cannon-ball in good condition, when he is in training—and before he is at all blown. So do we forget, we are sorry to confess, the number of centuries that it would take a good, stout, well-made, able-bodied cannon-ball, to accomplish a journey to our planet from one of the fixed stars. The great difficulty, we confess, would be to get him safely conveyed thither. If that could be done, we should have no fear of his finding his way back, if not in our time, in that of our posterity. However red-hot he might have been on starting, he would be cool enough, no doubt, on his arrival at the goal; yet we should have no objection to back him against Time for a trifle—Time, we observe, in almost all matches being beat, often indeed by the most miserable hacks, that can with difficulty raise a gallop. Time, however, possibly runs booty; for when he does make play, it must be confessed that he is a spanker, and that nothing has been seen with such a stride since Eclipse.

O beautiful and beloved Highland Parish! in whose dashing glens our beating heart first felt the awe of solitude, and learned to commune (alas! to what purpose!) with the tumult of its own thoughts! The circuit of thy skies was indeed a glorious arena spread over the mountain-tops for the combats of the great

birds of prey! One wild cry or another was in the lift—of the hawk, or the glead, or the raven, or the eagle—or when those fiends slept, of the peaceful heron, and sea-bird by wandering boys pursued in its easy flight, till the snow-white child of ocean wavered away far inland, as if in search of a steadfast happiness unknown on the restless waves. Seldom did the eagle stoop to the challenge of the inferior fowl; but when he did, it was like a mailed knight treading down unknown men in battle. The hawks, and the gleads, and the ravens, and the carrion-crows, and the hooded-crows, and the rooks, and the magpies, and all the rest of the rural militia, forgetting their own feuds, sometimes came sallying from all quarters, with even a few facetious jackdaws from the old castle, to show fight with the monarch of the air. Amidst all that multitude of wings winnowing the wind, was heard the sough and whizz of those mighty vans, as the Royal Bird, himself an army, performed his majestic evolutions with all the calm confidence of a master in the art of aerial war, now shooting up half-a-thousand feet perpendicular, and now suddenly plumb-down into the rear of the croaking, cawing, and chattering battalions, cutting off their retreat to the earth. Then the rout became general, the missing, however, far outnumbering the dead. Keeping possession of the field of battle, hung the eagle for a short while motionless—till with one fierce yell of triumph he seemed to seek the sun, and disappear like a speck in the light, surveying half of Scotland at a glance, and a thousand of her isles.

Some people have a trick of describing incidents as having happened within their own observation, when in fact they were at the time lying asleep in bed, and disturbing the whole house with the snore of their dormitory. Such is too often the character of the eye-witnesses of the present age. Now, we would not claim personal acquaintance with an incident we had not seen—no, not for a hundred guineas per sheet; and, therefore, we warn the reader not to believe the following little story about an eagle and child (by the way, that is the Derby crest, and a favourite sign of inns in the north of England) on our authority. "I tell the tale as 'twas told to me," by the schoolmaster of Naemanslaws, in the shire of Ayr; and if the incident never occurred, then must he have been one of the greatest liars that ever taught the young idea how to shoot. For our single selves, we are by nature credulous. Many extraordinary things happen in this life, and though "seeing is believing," so likewise "believing is seeing," as every one must allow who reads these our Recreations.

Almost all the people in the parish were leading in their meadow-hay (there were not in all its ten miles square twenty acres of ryegrass) on the same day of midsummer, so drying was the sunshine and the wind,—and huge heaped-up wains, that almost hid from view the horses that drew them along the sward, beginning to get green with second growth, were moving in all directions towards the snug farmyards. Never had the parish seemed before so populous. Jocund was the balmy air

with laughter, whistle, and song. But the Tree-gnomons threw the shadow of "one o'clock" on the green dial-face of the earth—the horses were unyoked, and took instantly to grazing—groups of men, women, lads, lasses, and children collected under grove, and bush, and hedge-row—graces were pronounced, some of them rather too tedious in presence of the mantling milk-cans, bullion-bars of butter, and crackling cakes; and the great Being who gave them that day their daily bread, looked down from his Eternal Throne, well-pleased with the piety of his thankful creatures.

The great Golden Eagle, the pride and the pest of the parish, stooped down, and away with something in his talons. One single sudden female shriek—and then shouts and outcries as if a church spire had tumbled down on a congregation at a sacrament. "Hannah Lamond's bairn! Hannah Lamond's bairn!" was the loud fast-spreading cry. "The Eagle's ta'en aff Hannah Lamond's bairn!" and many hundred feet were in another instant hurrying towards the mountain. Two miles of hill and dale, and copse and shingle, and many intersecting brooks, lay between; but in an incredibly short time the foot of the mountain was alive with people. The eyrie was well known, and both old birds were visible on the rock-ledge. But who shall scale that dizzy cliff, which Mark Steuart the sailor, who had been at the storming of many a fort, once attempted in vain? All kept gazing, or weeping, or wringing of hands, rooted to the ground, or running back and forwards, like so many ants essaying their new wings, in discomfiture. "What's the use—what's the use o' ony puir human means? We have nae power but in prayer!" And many knelt down—fathers and mothers thinking of their own babies—as if they would force the deaf heavens to hear.

Hannah Lamond had all this while been sitting on a stone, with a face perfectly white, and eyes like those of a mad person, fixed on the eyrie. Nobody noticed her; for strong as all sympathies with her had been at the swoop of the Eagle, they were now swallowed up in the agony of eyesight. "Only last Sabbath was my sweet wee wean baptized in the name o' the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" and on uttering these words, she flew off through the brakes and over the huge stones, up—up—up—faster than ever huntsman ran in to the death—fearless as a goat playing among the precipices. No one doubted, no one could doubt, that she would soon be dashed to pieces. But have not people who walk in their sleep, obedient to the mysterious guidance of dreams, clomb the walls of old ruins, and found footing, even in decrepitude, along the edge of unguarded battlements, and down dilapidated stair-cases deep as draw wells or coal-pits, and returned with open, fixed, and unseeing eyes, unharmed to their beds at midnight? It is all the work of the soul, to whom the body is a slave; and shall not the agony of a mother's passion—who sees her baby, whose warm mouth had just left her breast, hurried off by a demon to a hideous death—bear her limbs aloft wherever there is dust to dust, till she reach that devouring den,

and fiercer and more furious than any bird of prey that ever bathed its beak in blood, throttle the fiends that with their heavy wing would fain flap her down the cliffs, and hold up her child in deliverance?

No stop—no stay—she knew not that she drew her breath. Beneath her feet Providence fastened every loose stone, and to her hands strengthened every root. How was she ever to descend! That fear, then, but once crossed her heart, as up—up—up—to the little image made of her own flesh and blood. “The God who holds me now from perishing—will not the same God save me when my child is at my breast?” Down came the fierce rushing of the Eagles’ wings—each savage bird dashing close to her head, so that she saw the yellow of their wrathful eyes. All at once they quailed, and were cowed. Yelling, they flew off to the stump of an ash jutting out of a cliff, a thousand feet above the cataract; and the Christian mother, falling across the eyrie, in the midst of bones and blood, clasped her child—dead—dead—no doubt—but unmangled and untried—and swaddled up just as it was when she laid it down asleep among the fresh hay in a nook of the harvest-field. Oh! what pang of perfect blessedness transfixed her heart from that faint, feeble cry—“It lives! it lives! it lives!” and baring her bosom, with loud laughter, and eyes dry as stones, she felt the lips of the unconscious innocent once more murmuring at the fount of life and love. “O, thou great and thou dreadful God! whither hast thou brought me—one of the most sinful of thy creatures! Oh! save me lest I perish, even for thy own name’s sake! O Thou, who died to save sinners, have mercy upon me!” Cliffs, chasms, blocks of stone, and the skeletons of old trees—far—far down—and dwindled into specks a thousand creatures of her own kind, stationary or running to and fro! Was that the sound of the waterfall, or the faint roar of voices! Is that her native strath!—and that tuft of trees, does it contain the hut in which stands the cradle of her child? Never more shall it be rocked by her foot! Here must she die—and when her breast is exhausted—her baby too. And those horrid beaks, and eyes, and talons, and wings will return, and her child will be devoured at last, even within the dead arms that can protect it no more.

Where, all this while, was Mark Steuart, the sailor? Halfway up the cliffs. But his eyes had got dim, and his head dizzy, and his heart sick—and he who had so often reefed the top-gallant sail, when at midnight the coming of the gale was heard afar, covered his face with his hands, and dared look no longer on the swimming heights. “And who will take care of my poor bedridden mother?” thought Hannah, who, through exhaustion of so many passions, could no more retain in her grasp the hope she had clutched in despair. A voice whispered “God.” She looked round expecting to see a spirit; but nothing moved except a rotten branch, that, under its own weight, broke off from the crumbling rock. Her eye—by some secret sympathy with the inanimate object—watched its fall—and it seemed to stop,

not far off, on a small platform. Her child was bound upon her shoulders—she knew not how or when—but it was safe—and scarcely daring to open her eyes, she slid down the shelving rocks, and found herself on a small piece of firm root-bound soil, with the tops of bushes appearing below. With fingers suddenly strengthened into the power of iron, she swung herself down by brier, and broom, and heather, and dwarf-birch. There, a loosened stone leapt over a ledge, and no sound was heard, so profound was its fall. There, the shingle rattled down the screes, and she hesitated not to follow. Her feet bounded against the huge stone that stopped them; but she felt no pain. Her body was callous as the cliff. Steep as the wall of a house was now the side of the precipice. But it was matted with ivy centuries old—long ago dead, and without a single green leaf—but with thousands of arm-thick stems petrified into the rock, and covering it as with a trellice. She felt her baby on her neck, and with hands and feet clung to that fearful ladder. Turning round her head, and looking down, she saw the whole population of the parish—so great was the multitude—on their knees. She heard the voice of psalms—a hymn breathing the spirit of one united prayer. Sad and solemn was the strain—but nothing dirge-like—sounding not of death, but deliverance. Often had she sung that tune—perhaps the very words—but then she heard not—in her own hut, she and her mother—or in the kirk, along with all the congregation. An unseen hand seemed fastening her fingers to the ribs of ivy, and in sudden inspiration, believing that her life was to be saved, she became almost as fearless as if she had been changed into a winged creature. Again her feet touched stones and earth—the psalm was hushed—but a tremulous sobbing voice was close beside her, and a she-goat with two little kids at her feet. “Wild heights,” thought she, “do these creatures climb—but the dam will lead down her kids by the easiest paths; for in the brute creatures holy is the power of a mother’s love!” and turning round her head, she kissed her sleeping baby, and for the first time she wept.

Overhead frowned the front of the precipice, never touched before by human hand or foot. No one had ever dreamt of scaling it, and the Golden Eagles knew that well in their instinct, as, before they built their eyrie, they had brushed it with their wings. But the downwards part of the mountain-side, though scared, and seamed, and chasmed, was yet accessible—and more than one person in the parish had reached the bottom of the Glead’s Cliff. Many were now attempting it—and ere the cautious mother had followed her dumb guides a hundred yards, through among dangers that, although enough to terrify the stoutest heart, were traversed by her without a shudder, the head of one man appeared, and then the head of another, and she knew that God had delivered her and her child into the care of their fellow-creatures. Not a word was spoken—she hushed her friends with her hands—and with uplifted eyes pointed to the guides sent to her by Heaven. Small green plats, where

those creatures nibble the wild-flowers, became now more frequent—trodden lines, almost as plain as sheep-paths, showed that the dam had not led her young into danger; and now the brushwood dwindled away into straggling shrubs, and the party stood on a little eminence above the stream, and forming part of the strath.

There had been trouble and agitation, much sobbing and many tears, among the multitude, while the mother was scaling the cliffs—sublime was the shout that echoed afar the moment she reached the eyrie—then had succeeded a silence deep as death—in a little while arose that hymning prayer, succeeded by mute supplication—the wildness of thankful and congratulatory joy had next its sway—and now that her salvation was sure, the great crowd rustled like a wind-swept wood. And for whose sake was all this alternation of agony? A poor humble creature, unknown to many even by name—one who had had but few friends, nor wished for more—contented to work all day, here—there—anywhere—that she might be able to support her aged mother and her child—and who on Sabbath took her seat in an obscure pew, set apart for paupers, in the kirk.

“Fall back, and give her fresh air,” said the old minister of the parish; and the ring of close faces widened round her lying as in death. “Gie me the bonny bit bairn into my arms,” cried first one mother and then another, and it was tenderly handed round the circle of kisses, many of the snooded maidens bathing its face in tears. “There’s no a single scratch about the puir innocent, for the Eagle, you see, maun hae struck its talons into the lang claes and the shawl. Blin’ blin’ maun they be who see not the finger o’ God in this thing!”

Hannah started up from her swoon—and, looking wildly round cried, “Oh! the Bird—the Bird!—the Eagle—the Eagle!—The Eagle has carried off my bonny wee Walter—is there nane to pursue?” A neighbour put her baby into her breast; and shutting her eyes, and smiting her forehead, the sorely bewildered creature said in a low voice, “Am I wauken—oh! tell me if I’m wauken—or if a’ this be but the wark o’ a fever.”

Hannah Lamond was not yet twenty years old, and although she was a mother—and you may guess what a mother—yet—frown not, fair and gentle reader—frown not, pure and stainless as thou art—to her belonged not the sacred name of wife—and that baby was the child of sin and shame—yes—“the child of misery, baptized in tears!” She had loved—trusted—been betrayed—and deserted. In sorrow and solitude—uncomforted and despised—she bore her burden. Dismal had been the hour of travail—and she feared her mother’s heart would have broken, even when her own was cleft in twain. But how healing is forgiveness—alike to the wounds of the forgiving and the forgiven! And then Hannah knew that, although guilty before God, her guilt was not such as her fellow-creatures deemed it—for there were dreadful secrets which should never pass her lips against the father of her child. So she bowed down her young head,

and soiled it with the ashes of repentance—walking with her eyes on the ground as she again entered the kirk—yet not fearing to lift them up to heaven during the prayer. Her sadness inspired a general pity—she was excluded from no house she had heart to visit—no coarse comment, no ribald jest accompanied the notice people took of her baby—no licentious rustic presumed on her frailty; for the pale, melancholy face of the nursing mother, weeping as she sung the lullaby, forbade all such approach—and an universal sentiment of indignation drove from the parish the heartless and unprincipled seducer—if all had been known, too weak word for his crime—who left thus to pine in sorrow, and in shame far worse than sorrow, one who till her unhappy fall had been held up by every mother as an example to her daughters.

Never had she striven to cease to love her betrayer—but she had striven—and an appeased conscience had enabled her to do so—to think not of him now that he had deserted her for ever. Sometimes his image, as well in love as in wrath, passed before the eye of her heart—but she closed it in tears of blood, and the phantom disappeared. Thus all the love towards him that slept—but was not dead—arose in yearnings of still more exceeding love towards her child. Round its head was gathered all hope of comfort—of peace—of reward of her repentance. One of its smiles was enough to brighten up the darkness of a whole day. In her breast—on her knee—in its cradle, she regarded it with a perpetual prayer. And this feeling it was, with all the overwhelming tenderness of affection, all the invigorating power of passion, that, under the hand of God, bore her up and down that fearful mountain’s brow, and after the hour of rescue and deliverance, stretched her on the greensward like a corpse.

The rumour of the miracle circled the mountain’s base, and a strange story without names had been told to the Wood-ranger of the Cairn-Forest, by a wayfaring man. Anxious to know what truth there was in it, he crossed the hill, and making his way through the sullen crowd, went up to the eminence, and beheld her whom he had so wickedly ruined, and so basely deserted. Hisses, and groans, and hootings, and fierce eyes, and clenched hands assailed and threatened him on every side.

His heart died within him, not in fear, but in remorse. What a worm he felt himself to be! And fain would he have become a worm that, to escape all that united human scorn, he might have wriggled away in slime into some hole of the earth. But the meek eye of Hannah met his in forgiveness—an unupbraiding tear—a faint smile of love. All his better nature rose within him, all his worse nature was quelled. “Yes, good people, you do right to cover me with your scorn. But what is your scorn to the wrath of God? The Evil One has often been with me in the woods; the same voice that once whispered me to murder her—but here I am—not, to offer retribution—for that may not—will not—must not be—guilt must not mate with innocence. But here I

proclaim that innocence. I deserve death, and I am willing here, on this spot, to deliver myself into the hands of justice. Allan Calder—I call on you to seize your prisoner."

The moral sense of the people, when instructed by knowledge and enlightened by religion, what else is it but the voice of God! Their anger subsided into a stern satisfaction—and that soon softened, in sight of her who, alone aggrieved, alone felt nothing but forgiveness, into a confused compassion for the man who, bold and bad as he had been, had undergone many solitary torments, and nearly fallen in his unaccompanied misery into the power of the Prince of Darkness. The old clergyman, whom all revered, put the contrite man's hand in hers, whom he swore to love and cherish all his days. And, ere summer was over, Hannah was the mistress of a family, in a house not much inferior to a Manse. Her mother, now that not only her daughter's reputation was freed from stain, but her innocence also proved, renewed her youth. And although the worthy schoolmaster, who told us the tale so much better than we have been able to repeat it, confessed that the wood-ranger never became altogether a saint—nor acquired the edifying habit of pulling down the corners of his mouth, and turning up the whites of his eyes—yet he assured us, that he never afterwards heard any thing very seriously to his prejudice—that he became in due time an elder of the kirk—gave his children a religious education—erring only in making rather too much of a pet of his eldest born, whom, even when grown up to manhood, he never called by any other name than the Eaglet.

THIRD CANTICLE.

THE RAVEN! In a solitary glen sits down on a stone the roaming pedestrian, beneath the hush and gloom of a thundery sky that has not yet begun to growl, and hears no sounds but that of an occasional big rain-drop plashing on the bare bent; the crag high overhead sometimes utters a sullen groan—the pilgrim, starting, listens, and the noise is repeated, but instead of a groan, a croak—croak—croak! manifestly from a thing with life. A pause of silence! and hollower and hoarser the croak is heard from the opposite side of the glen. Eyeing the black sultry heaven, he feels the warm plash on his face, but sees no bird on the wing. By and by, something black lifts itself slowly and heavily up from a precipice, in deep shadow; and before it has cleared the rock-range, and entered the upper region of air, he knows it to be a Raven. The creature seems wroth to be disturbed in his solitude, and in his strong straight-forward flight aims at the head of another glen; but he wheels round at the iron barrier, and, alighting among the heather, folds his huge massy wings, and leaps about as if in anger, with the same savage croak—croak—croak! No other bird so like a demon—and should you chance to break a leg in the desert, and be unable to crawl to a hut, your life is not worth

twenty-four hours' purchase. Never was there a single hound in all Lord Darlington's packs, since his lordship became a mighty hunter, with nostrils so fine as those of that feathered fiend, covered though they be with strong hairs or bristles, that grimly adorn a bill of formidable dimensions, and apt for digging out eye-socket and splitting skull-suture of dying man or beast. That bill cannot tear in pieces like the eagle's beak, nor are its talons so powerful to smite as to compress—but a better bill for cut-and-thrust—push, carte, and tierce—the dig dismal and the plunge profound—belongs to no other bird. It inflicts great gashes; nor needs the wound to be repeated on the same spot. Feeder foul and obscene! to thy nostril upturned "into the murky air, sagacious of thy quarry from afar," sweeter is the scent of carrion, than to the panting lover's sense and soul the fragrance of his own virgin's breath and bosom, when, lying in her innocence in his arms, her dishevelled tresses seem laden with something more ethereally pure than "Sabeian odours from the spicy shores of Araby the Blest."

The Raven dislikes all animal food that has not a deathly smack. It cannot be thought that he has any reverence or awe of the mystery of life. Neither is he a coward; at least, not such a coward as to fear the dying kick of a lamb or sheep. Yet so long as his victim can stand, or sit, or lie in a strong struggle, the raven keeps aloof—hopping in a circle that narrows and narrows as the sick animal's nostrils keep dilating in convulsions, and its eyes grow dimmer and more dim. When the prey is in the last agonies, croaking, he leaps upon the breathing carcass, and whets his bill upon his own blue-ringed legs, steadied by claws in the fleece, yet not so fiercely inserted as to get entangled and fast. With his large level-crowned head bobbing up and down, and turned a little first to one side and then to another, all the while a self-congratulatory leer in his eye, he unfolds his wings, and then folds them again, twenty or thirty times, as if dubious how to begin to gratify his lust of blood; and frequently, when just on the brink of consummation, jumps off side, back, or throat, and goes dallying about, round and round, and off to a small safe distance, scenting, almost snorting, the smell of the blood running cold, colder, and more cold. At last the poor wretch is still; and then, without waiting till it is stiff, he goes to work earnestly and passionately, and taught by horrid instinct how to reach the entrails, revels in obscene gluttony, and preserves, it may be, eye, lip, palate, and brain, for the last course of his meal, gorged to the throat, incapacitated to return thanks, and with difficulty able either to croak or to fly.

The Raven, it is thought, is in the habit of living upwards of a hundred years, perhaps a couple of centuries. Children grow into girls, girls into maidens, maidens into wives, wives into widows, widows into old decrepit crones, and crones into dust; and the Raven who wons at the head of the glen, is aware of all the births, baptisms, marriages, death-beds, and funerals. Certain it is—at least so men

say—that he is aware of the death-beds and the funerals. Often does he flap his wings against door and window of hut, when the wretch within is in extremity, or, sitting on the heather-roof, croaks horror into the dying dream. As the funeral winds its way towards the mountain cemetery he hovers aloft in the air—or, swooping down nearer to the bier, precedes the corpse like a sable sauley. While the party of friends are carousing in the house of death, he, too, scorning funeral-baked meats, croaks hoarse hymns and dismal dirges as he is devouring the pet-lamb of the little grandchild of the deceased. The shepherds maintain that the Raven is sometimes heard to laugh. Why not, as well as the hyena? Then it is that he is most diabolical, for he knows that his laughter is prophetic of human death. True it is, and it would be injustice to conceal the fact, much more to deny it, that Ravens of old fed Elijah; but that was the punishment of some old sin committed by Two who before the Flood bore the human shape, and who, soon as the ark rested on Mount Ararat, flew off to the desolation of swamped forests and the disfigured solitude of the drowned glens. Dying Ravens hide themselves from daylight in burial-places among the rocks, and are seen hobbling into their tombs, as if driven thither by a flock of fears, and crouching under a remorse that disturbs instinct, even as if it were conscience. So sings and says the Celtic superstition—muttered to us in a dream—adding that there are Raven ghosts, great black bundles of feathers, for ever in the forest, night-hunting in famine for prey, emitting a last feeble croak at the blush of dawn, and then all at once invisible.

There can be no doubt that that foolish Quaker, who some twenty years ago perished at the foot of a crag near Red Tarn, "far in the bosom of Helvyllyn," was devoured by ravens. We call him foolish, because no adherent of that sect was ever qualified to find his way among mountains when the day was shortish, and the snow, if not very deep, yet wreathed and pit-falled. In such season and weather, no place so fit for a Quaker as the fireside. Not to insist, however, on that point, with what glee the few hungry and thirsty old Ravens belonging to the Red Tarn Club must have flocked to the Ordinary! Without asking each other to which part this, that, or the other croaker chose to be helped, the maxim which regulated their behaviour at table was doubtless, "First come, first served." Forthwith each bill was busy, and the scene became animated in the extreme. There must have been great difficulty to the most accomplished of the carrion in stripping the Quaker of his drab. The broad-brim had probably escaped with the first intention, and after going before the wind half across the unfrozen Tarn, cap-sized, filled, and sunk. Picture to yourself so many devils, all in glossy black feather coats and dark breeches, with waistcoats inclining to blue, pully-hawlying away at the unresisting figure of the follower of Fox, and getting first vexed and then irritated with the pieces of choking soft armour in which, five or six ply thick, his inviting carcass was so provokingly

insheathed! First a drab duffle cloak—then a drab wraprascal—then a drab broad-cloth coat, made in the oldest fashion—then a drab waistcoat of the same—then a drab under-waistcoat of thinner mould—then a linen-shirt, somewhat drabbish—then a flannel-shirt, entirely so, and most odorous to the nostrils of the members of the Red Tarn Club. All this must have taken a couple of days at the least; so, supposing the majority of members assembled about eight A. M. on the Sabbath morning, it must have been well on to twelve o'clock on Monday night before the club could have comfortably sat down to supper. During these two denuding days, we can well believe that the President must have been hard put to it to keep the secretary, treasurer, chaplain, and other office-bearers, ordinary and extraordinary members, from giving a sly dig at Obadiah's face, so tempting in the fallow hue and rank smell of first corruption. Dead bodies keep well in frost; but the subject had in this case probably fallen from a great height, had his bones broken to smash, his flesh bruised and mangled. The President, therefore, we repeat it, even though a raven of great age and authority, must have had inconceivable difficulty in controlling the Club. The croak of "Order!—order!—Chair!—chair!"—must have been frequent; and had the office not been hereditary, the old gentleman would no doubt have thrown it up, and declared the chair vacant. All obstacles and obstructions having been by inde fatigable activity removed, no attempt, we may well believe, was made by the seneschal to place the guests according to their rank, above or below the salt, and the party sat promiscuously down to a late supper. Not a word was uttered during the first half hour, till a queer-looking mortal, who had spent several years of his prime of birdhood at old Calgarth, and picked up a tolerable command of the Westmoreland dialect by means of the Hamiltonian system, exclaimed, "Pse weel nee brussen—there be's Mister Wudsworth—Ho, ho, ho!" It was indeed the bard, benighted in the Excursion from Patterdale to Jobson's Cherry-Tree; and the Red Tarn Club, afraid of having their orgies put into blank verse, sailed away in floating fragments beneath the moon and stars.

But over the doom of one true Lover of Nature let us shed a flood of rueful tears; for at what tale shall mortal man weep, if not at the tale of youthful genius and virtue shrouded suddenly in a winding-sheet wreathed of snow by the pitiless tempest! Elate in the joy of solitude, he hurried like a fast travelling shadow into the silence of the frozen mountains, all beautifully encrusted with pearls, and jewels, and diamonds, beneath the resplendent night-heavens. The din of populous cities had long stunned his brain, and his soul had sickened in the presence of the money-hunting eyes of selfish men, all madly pursuing their multifarious machinations in the great mart of commerce. The very sheeted masts of ships, bearing the flags of foreign countries, in all their pomp and beauty sailing homeward or outward-bound, had become hateful to his spirit—for what were they but the floating enginery of Mammon? Truth, integrity honour,

were all recklessly sacrificed to gain by the friends he loved and had respected most—sacrificed without shame and without remorse—repentance being with them a repentance only over ill-laid schemes of villany—plans for the ruination of widows and orphans, blasted in the bud of their iniquity. The brother of his bosom made him a bankrupt—and for a year the jointure of his widow-mother was unpaid. But she died before the second Christmas—and he was left alone in the world. Poor indeed he was, but not a beggar. A legacy came to him from a distant relation—almost the only one of his name—who died abroad. Small as it was, it was enough to live on—and his enthusiastic spirit gathering joy from distress, vowed to dedicate itself in some profound solitude to the love of Nature, and the study of her Great Laws. He bade an eternal farewell to cities at the dead of midnight, beside his mother's grave, scarcely distinguishable among the thousand flat stones, sunk, or sinking into the wide churchyard, along which a great thoroughfare of life roared like the sea. And now, for the first time, his sorrow flung from him like a useless garment, he found himself alone among the Cumbrian mountains, and impelled in strong idolatry almost to kneel down and worship the divine beauty of the moon, and “stars that are the poetry of heaven.”

Not uninstructed was the wanderer in the lore that links the human heart to the gracious form and aspects of the Mighty Mother. In early youth he had been intended for the Church, and subsequent years of ungrateful and ungenial toils had not extinguished the fine scholarship that native aptitude for learning had acquired in the humble school of the village in which he was born. He had been ripe for College when the sudden death of his father, who had long been at the head of a great mercantile concern, imposed it upon him, as a sacred duty owed to his mother and sisters, to embark in trade. Not otherwise could he hope ever to retrieve their fortunes—and for ten years for their sake he was a slave, till ruin set him free. Now he was master of his own destiny—and sought some humble hut in that magnificent scenery, where he might pass a blameless life, and among earth's purest joys prepare his soul for heaven. Many such humble huts had he seen during that one bold, bright, beautiful spring-winter day. Each wreath of smoke from the breathing chimneys, while the huts themselves seemed hardly awakened from sleep in the morning-calm, led his imagination up into the profound peace of the sky. In any one of those dwellings, peeping from sheltered dells, or perched on wind-swept eminences, could he have taken up his abode, and sat down contented at the board of their simple inmates. But in the very delirium of a new bliss, the day faded before him—twilight looked lovelier than dream-land in the reflected glimmer of the snow—and thus had midnight found him, in a place so utterly lone-some in its remoteness from all habitations, that even in summer no stranger sought it without the guidance of some shepherd familiar with the many bewildering passes that

stretched away in all directions through among the mountains to distant vales. No more fear or thought had he of being lost in the wilderness, than the ring-dove that flies from forest to forest in the winter season, and, without the aid even of vision, trusts to the instinctive wafting of her wings through the paths of ether.

As he continued gazing on the heavens, the moon all at once lost something of her brightness—the stars seemed fewer in number—and the lustre of the rest as by mist obscured. The blue ethereal frame grew discoloured with streaks of red and yellow—and a sort of dim darkness deepened and deepened on the air, while the mountains appeared higher, and at the same time further off, as if he had been transported in a dream to another region of the earth. A sound was heard, made up of far-mustering winds, echoes from caves, swinging of trees, and the murmur as of a great lake or sea beginning to break on the shore. A few flakes of snow touched his face, and the air grew cold. A clear tarn had a few minutes before glittered with moonbeams, but now it had disappeared. Sleet came thicker and faster, and ere long it was a storm of snow. “O God! my last hour is come!” and scarcely did he hear his own voice in the roaring tempest.

Men have died in dungeons—and their skeletons been found long years afterwards lying on the stone floor, in postures that told through what hideous agonies they had passed into the world of spirits. But no eye saw, nor ear heard, and the prison-visitor gathers up, as he shudders, but a dim conviction of some long horror from the bones. One day in spring, long after the snows were melted—except here and there a patch like a flock of sheep on some sunless exposure—a huge Raven rose heavily, as if gorged with prey, before the feet of a shepherd, who, going forward to the spot where the bird had been feeding, beheld a rotting corpse! A dog, itself almost a skeleton, was lying near, and began to whine at his approach. On its collar was the name of its master—a name unknown in that part of the country—and weeks elapsed before any person could be heard of that could tell the history of the sufferer. A stranger came and went—taking the faithful creature with him that had so long watched by the dead—but long before his arrival the remains had been interred; and you may see the grave, a little way on from the south gate, on your right hand as you enter, not many yards from the Great Yew-Tree in the churchyard of ———, not far from the foot of Ullswater.

Gentle reader! we have given you two versions of the same story—and pray, which do you like the best? The first is the most funny, the second the most affecting. We have observed that the critics are not decided on the question of our merits as a writer; some maintaining that we are strongest in humour—others, that our power is in pathos. The judicious declare that our forte lies in both—in the two united, or alternating with each other. “But is it not quite shocking,” exclaims some scribbler who has been knouted in Ebony, “to hear so very serious an affair as the death of a Quaker in the snow among mountains, treated

with such heartless levity! The man who wrote that description, sir, of the Ordinary of the Red Tarn Club, would not scruple to commit murder!" Why, if killing a scribbler be murder, the writer of that—this—article confesses that he has more than once committed that capital crime. But no intelligent jury, taking into consideration the law as well as the fact—and it is often their duty to do so, let high authorities say what they will—would for a moment hesitate, in any of the cases alluded to, to bring in a verdict of "Justifiable homicide." The gentleman or lady who has honoured us so far with perusal, knows enough of human life, and of their own hearts, to know also that there is no other subject which men of genius—and who ever denied that we are men of genius?—have been accustomed to view in so many ludicrous lights as this same subject of death; and the reason is at once obvious—yet *recherche*—videlicet, Death is, in itself and all that belongs to it, such a sad, cold, wild, dreary, dismal, distracting, and dreadful thing, that at times men talking about it cannot choose but laugh!

Too-hoo — too-hoo — too-whit-too-hoo!—we have got among the OWLS. Venerable personages, in truth, they are—perfect Solomons! The spectator, as in most cases of very solemn characters, feels himself at first strongly disposed to commit the gross indecorum of bursting out a-laughing in their face. One does not see the absolute necessity either of man or bird looking at all times so unaccountably wise. Why will an Owl persist in his stare? Why will a Bishop never lay aside his wig!

People ignorant of Ornithology will stare like the Bird of Wisdom himself on being told that an Owl is an Eagle. Yet, bating a little inaccuracy, it is so. Eagles, kites, hawks, and owls, all belong to the genus *Falco*. We hear a great deal too much in poetry of the moping Owl, the melancholy Owl, the boding Owl, whereas he neither mopes nor bodes, and is no more melancholy than becomes a gentleman. We also hear of the Owl being addicted to spirituous liquors; and hence the expression, as drunk as an Owl. All this is mere Whig personality, the Owl being a Tory of the old school, and a friend of the ancient establishments of church and state. Nay, the same political party, although certainly the most short-sighted of God's creatures, taunt the Owl with being blind. As blind as an Owl is a libel in frequent use out of ornithological society. Shut up Lord Jeffrey himself in a hay-barn with a well-built mow, and ask him in the darkness to catch you a few mice, and he will tell you whether or not the Owl be blind. This would be just as fair as to expect the Owl to see, like Lord Jeffrey, through a case in the Parliament House during daylight. Nay, we once heard a writer in Taylor and Hessey call the Owl stupid, he himself having longer ears than any species of Owl extant. What is the positive character of the Owl may perhaps appear by and by; but we have seen that, describing his character by negations, we may say that, he resembles Napoleon Bonaparte much more than Joseph Hume or Alderman Wood. He is not moping—not boding—not

melancholy—not a drunkard—not blind—not stupid; as much as it would be prudent to say of any man, whether editor or contributor, in her Majesty's dominions.

We really have no patience with people who persist in all manner of misconceptions regarding the character of birds. Birds often appear to such persons, judging from, of, and by themselves, to be in mind and manners the reverse of their real character. They judge the inner bird by outward circumstances inaccurately observed. There is the owl. How little do the people of England know of him—even of him the barn-door and domestic owl—yea, even at this day—we had almost said the Poets! Shakspeare, of course, and his freres, knew him to be a merry fellow—quite a mad-cap—and so do now all the Lakers. But Cowper had his doubts about it; and Gray, as every schoolboy knows, speaks of him like an old wife. The force of folly can go no further, than to imagine an owl complaining to the moon of being disturbed by people walking in a country churchyard. And among all our present bardings, the owl is supposed to be constantly on the eve of suicide. If it were really so, he ought in a Christian country to be pitied, not pelted, as he is sure to be when accidentally seen in sunlight—for melancholy is a misfortune, especially when hereditary and constitutional, as it is popularly believed to be in the Black-billed Bubo, and certainly was in Dr. Johnson. In young masters and misses we can pardon any childishness; but we cannot pardon the antipathy to the owl entertained by the many minds of grown-up English clodhoppers, ploughmen, and threshers. They keep terriers to kill rats and mice in barns, and they shoot the owls, any one of whom we would cheerfully back against the famous Billy. "The very commonest observation teaches us," says the author of the "Gardens of the Menagerie," "that they are in reality the best and most efficient protectors of our cornfields and granaries from the devastating pillage of the swarms of mice and other small rodents." Nay, by their constant destruction of these petty but dangerous enemies, the owls, he says, "earn an unquestionable title to be regarded as among the *most active of the friends of man*; a title which only one or two among them occasionally forfeit by their aggressions on the defenceless poultry." Roger or Dolly beholds him in the act of murdering a duckling, and, like other light-headed, giddy, unthinking creatures, they forget all the service he has done the farm, the parish, and the state; he is shot *in the act*, and nailed, wide-extended in cruel spread-eagle, on the barn-door. Others again call him dull and short-sighted—nay, go the length of asserting that he is stupid—as stupid as an owl. Why, our excellent fellow, when you have the tithe of the talent of the common owl, and know half as well how to use it, you may claim the medal.

The eagles, kites, and hawks, hunt by day. The Owl is the Nimrod of the Night. Then, like one who shall be nameless, he sails about seeking those whom he may devour. To do him justice, he has a truly ghost-like head and shoulders of his own. What horror to the

"small birds rejoicing in spring's leafy bowers," fast-locked we were going to say in each other's arms, but sitting side by side in the same cozey nuptial nest, to be startled out of their love-dreams by the great lamp-eyed, beaked face of a horrible monster with horns, picked out of feathered bed, and wafted off in one bunch, within talons, to pacify a set of hissing, and snappish, and shapeless powder-puffs, in the loophole of a barn? In a house where a cat is kept, mice are much to be pitied. They are so infatuated with the smell of a respectable larder, that to leave the premises, they confess, is impossible. Yet every hour—nay, every minute of their lives—must they be in the fear of being leaped out upon by four velvet paws, and devoured with kisses from a whiskered mouth, and a throat full of that incomprehensible music—a purr. Life, on such terms, seems to us any thing but desirable. But the truth is, that mice in the fields are not a whit better off. Owls are cats with wings. Skimming along the grass tops, they stop in a momentary hover, let drop a talon, and away with Mus, his wife, and small family of blind children. It is the white, or yellow, or barn, or church, or Screech-Owl, or Gilley-Howlet, that behaves in this way; and he makes no bones of a mouse, uniformly swallowing him alive. Our friend, we suspect, though no drunkard, is somewhat of a glutton. In one thing we agree with him, that there is no sort of harm in a heavy supper. There, however, we are guilty of some confusion of ideas; for what to us, who rise in the morning, seems a supper, is to him who gets up at evening twilight, a breakfast. We therefore agree with him in thinking that there is no sort of harm in a heavy breakfast. After having passed a pleasant night in eating and flirting, he goes to bed betimes, about four o'clock in the morning; and, as Bewick observes, makes a blowing, hissing noise, resembling the snoring of a man. Indeed, nothing can be more diverting to a person annoyed by blue devils, than to look at a White Owl and his wife asleep. With their heads gently inclined towards each other, there they keep snoring away like any Christian couple. Should the one make a pause, the other that instant awakes, and, fearing something may be wrong with his spouse, opens a pair of glimmering winking eyes, and inspects the adjacent physiognomy with the scrutinizing stare of a village apothecary. If all be right, the concert is resumed, the snore sometimes degenerating into a snort of snivel, and the snivel into a blowing hiss. First time we heard this noise was in a churchyard when we were mere boys, having ventured in after dark to catch the minister's colt for a gallop over to the parish-capital, where there was a dancing-school ball. There had been a nest of Owls in some hole in the spire; but we never doubted for a moment that the noise of snoring, blowing, hissing, and snapping proceeded from a testy old gentleman that had been buried that forenoon, and had come alive again a day after the fair. Had we reasoned the matter a little, we must soon have convinced ourselves that there was no ground for alarm to us at least, for the noise was like that of some one

half stifled, and little likely to heave up from above him a six-feet-deep load of earth—to say nothing of the improbability of his being able to unscrew the coffin from the inside. Be that as it may, we cleared about a dozen of decent tombstones at three jumps—the fourth took us over a wall five feet high within and about fifteen without, and landed us, with a squash, in a cabbage-garden inclosed on the other three sides by a house and a holly-hedge. The house was the sexton's, who, apprehending the stramash to proceed from a resurrectionary surgeon mistaken in his latitude, thrust out a long duck-gun from a window in the thatch, and swore to blow out our brains if we did not instantly surrender ourselves, and deliver up the corpse. It was in vain to cry out our name, which he knew as well as his own. He was deaf to reason, and would not withdraw his patterero till we had laid down the corpse. He swore that he saw the sack in the moonlight. This was a horse-cloth with which we had intended to saddle the "cowte," and that had remained, during the supernatural agency under which we laboured, clutched unconsciously and convulsively in our grasp. Long was it ere Davie Donald would see us in our true light—but at length he drew on his Kilmarnock nightcap, and, coming out with a bouet, let us through the trance and out of the front door, thoroughly convinced, till we read Bewick, that old Southfield was not dead, although in a very bad way indeed. Let this be a lesson to schoolboys not to neglect the science of natural history, and to study the character of the White Owl.

Owls—both White and common Brown, are not only useful in a mountainous country, but highly ornamental. How serenely beautiful their noiseless flight; a flake of snow is not winnowed through the air more softly-silent! Gliding along the dark shadows of a wood, how spiritual the motion—how like the thought of a dream! And then, during the hushed midnight hours, how jocund the whoop and hollo from the heart of sycamore—gray rock, or ivied Tower! How the Owls of Windermere must laugh at the silly Lakers, that under the garish eye of day, enveloped in clouds of dust, whirl along in rattling post-shays in pursuit of the picturesque! Why, the least imaginative Owl that ever hunted mice by moonlight on the banks of Windermere, must know the character of its scenery better than any poetaster that ever dined on char at Bowness or Lowood. The long quivering lines of light illumining some silvan isle—the evening-star shining from the water to its counterpart in the sky—the glorious phenomenon of the double moon—the night-colours of the woods—and, once in the three years perhaps, that loveliest and most lustrous of celestial forms, the lunar rainbow—all these and many more beauteous and magnificent sights are familiar to the Owls of Windermere. And who know half so well as they do the echoes of Furness, and Applethwaite, and Loughrigg, and Langdale, all the way on to Dungeon-Gill and Pavey-Ark, Scawfell and the Great Gable, and that sea of mountains, of which every wave has a name? Midnight—when asleep so still and silent—seems

inspired with the joyous spirit of the Owls in their revelry—and answers to their mirth and merriment through all her clouds. The Moping Owl, indeed!—the Boding Owl, forsooth!—the Melancholy Owl, you blockhead!—why, they are the most cheerful—joy-portending—and exulting of God's creatures! Their flow of animal spirits is incessant—crowing-cocks are a joke to them—blue devils are to them unknown—not one hypochondriac in a thousand barns—and the Man-in-the-Moon acknowledges that he never heard one of them utter a complaint.

But what say ye to an Owl, not only like an eagle in plumage, but equal to the largest eagle in size—and therefore named, from the King of Birds, the *EAGLE OWL*. Mr. Selby! you have done justice to the monarch of the Bubos. We hold ourselves to be persons of tolerable courage, as the world goes—but we could not answer for ourselves showing fight with such a customer, were he to waylay us by night in a wood. In comparison, Jack Thurtell looked harmless. No—that bold, bright-eyed murderer, with Horns on his head like those on Michael Angelo's statue of Moses, would never have had the cruel cowardice to cut the weasand, and smash out the brains of such a miserable wretch as Weare! True he is fond of blood—and where's the harm in that? It is his nature. But if there be any truth in the science of Physiognomy—and be that of Phrenology what it will, most assuredly there is truth in it—the original of that Owl, for whose portrait the world is indebted to Mr. Selby, and Sir Thomas Lawrence never painted a finer one of Prince or Potentate of any Holy or Unholy Alliance, must have despised Probert from the very bottom of his heart. No prudent Eagle but would be exceedingly desirous of keeping on good terms with him—devilish shy, i' faith, of giving him any offence by the least hauteur of manner, or the slightest violation of etiquette. An Owl of this character and calibre, is not afraid to show his horns at mid-day on the mountain. The Fox is not over and above fond of him—and his claws can kill a cub at a blow. The Doe sees the monster sitting on the back of her fawn, and maternal instinct overcome by horror, bounds into the brake, and leaves the pretty creature to its fate. Thank Heaven, he is, in Great Britain, a rare bird! Tempest-driven across the Northern Ocean from his native forests in Russia, an occasional visitant he "frightens this Isle from its propriety," and causes a hideous screaming through every wood he haunts. Some years ago, one was killed on the upland moors in the county of Durham—and, of course, paid a visit to Mr. Bullock's Museum. Eagle-like in all its habits, it builds its nest on high rocks—sometimes on the loftiest trees—and seldom lays more than two eggs. One is one more than enough—and we who fly by night trust never to fall in with a live specimen of the *Strix-Bubo* of Linnæus.

But largest and loveliest of all the silent night-gliders—the *SNOWY OWL*! Gentle reader—if you long to see his picture, we have told you where it may be found;—and in the College Museum, within a glass vase on the cen-

tral table in the Palace of Stuffed Birds, you may admire his outward very self—the semblance of the Owl he was when he used to eye the moon shining over the Northern Sea:—but if you would see the noble and beautiful Creature himself, in all his living glory, you must seek him through the long summer twilight among the Orkney or the Shetland Isles. The Snowy Owl dearly loves the snow—and there is, we believe, a tradition among them, that their first ancestor and ancestress rose up together from a melting snow-wreath on the very last day of a Greenland winter, when all at once the bright fields re-appear. The race still inhabits that frozen coast—being common, indeed, through all the regions of the Arctic Circle. It is numerous on the shores of Hudson's Bay, in Norway, Sweden, and Lapland—but in the temperate parts of Europe and America, "*rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno*."

We defy all the tailors on the face of the habitable globe; and what countless cross-legged fractional parts of men—who, like the beings of whom they are constituents, are thought to double their numbers every thirty years—must not the four quarters of the earth, in their present advanced state of civilization, contain!—we defy, we say, all the tailors on the face of the habitable globe to construct such a surtout as that of the Snowy Owl, covering him, with equal luxury and comfort, in summer's heat and winter's cold. The elements, in all their freezing fury, cannot reach the body of the bird through that beautiful down-mail. Well guarded are the openings of those great eyes. Neither the driving dust, nor the searching sleet, nor the sharp frozen snow-stoure, give him the ophthalmia. Gutta Serena is to him unknown—no snowy Owl was ever couched for cataract—no need has he for an oculist, should he live an hundred years; and were they to attempt any operation on his lens or iris, how he would hoot at Alexander and Wardrobe!

Night, doubtless, is the usual season of his prey; but he does not shun the day, and is sometimes seen hovering unhurt in the sunshine. The red or black grouse flies as if pursued by a ghost; but the Snowy Owl, little slower than the eagle, in dreadful silence overtakes his flight, and then death is sudden and sure. Hawking is, or was, a noble pastime—and we have now prevented our eyes from glancing at Jer-falcon, Peregrine, or Goshawk—but Owling, we do not doubt, would be noways inferior sport; and were it to become prevalent in modern times, as Hawking was in times of old, why, each lady, as Venus already fair, with an Owl on her wrist, would look as wise as Minerva.

But our soul sickens at all those dreams of blood! and fain would turn away from fierce eye, cruel beak, and tearing talon—war-weapons of them that delight in wounds and death—to the contemplation of creatures whose characteristics are the love of solitude—shy gentleness of manner—the tender devotion of mutual attachment—and, in field or forest, a lifelong passion for peace.

FOURTH CANTICLE.

WELCOME then the RING-DOVE—the QUEST—or CUSHAT, for that is the very bird we have had in our imagination. There is his full-length portrait, stealthily sketched as the Solitary was sitting on a tree. You must catch him napping, indeed, before he will allow you an opportunity of colouring him on the spot from nature. It is not that he is more jealous or suspicious of man's approach than other bird; for never shall we suffer ourselves to believe that any tribe of the descendants of the Dove that brought to the Ark the olive tidings of re-appearing earth, can in their hearts hate or fear the race of the children of man. But Nature has made the Cushat a lover of the still forest-gloom; and therefore, when his lonesome haunts are disturbed or intruded on, he flies to some yet profounder, some more central solitude, and folds his wing in the hermitage of a Yew, sown in the time of the ancient Britons.

It is the Stock-Dove, we believe, not the Ring-Dove, from whom are descended all the varieties of the races of Doves. What tenderer praise can we give them all, than that the Dove is the emblem of Innocence, and that the name of innocence—not of frailty—is Woman? When Hamlet said the reverse, he was thinking, you know, of the Queen—not of Ophelia. Is not woman by nature chaste as the Dove—as the Dove faithful? Sitting all alone with her babe in her bosom, is she not as a Dove devoted to her own nest? Murmureth she not a pleasant welcome to her wearied home-returned husband, even like the Dove among the woodlands when her mate re-aliases on the pine? Should her spouse be taken from her and disappear, doth not her heart sometimes break, as they say it happens to the Dove? But oftener far, findeth not the widow that her orphans are still fed by her own hand, that is filled with good things by Providence; till grown up, and able to shift for themselves, away they go—just as the poor Dove lamenteth for her mate in the snare of the fowler, yet feedeth her young continually through the whole day, till away too go they—alas, in neither case, perhaps, ever more to return!

We dislike all favouritism, all foolish and capricious partiality for particular bird or beast; but dear, old, sacred associations, will tell upon all one thinks or feels towards any place or person in this world of ours, near or remote. God forbid we should criticise the Cushat! We desire to speak of him as tenderly as of a friend buried in our early youth. Too true it is, that often and oft, when school-boys, have we striven to steal upon him in his solitude, and to shoot him to death. In morals, and in religion, it would be heterodox to deny that the will is as the deed. Yet in cases of high and low-way robbery and murder, there goes seem, treating the subject not in philosophical but popular style, to be some little difference between the two; at least we hope so, for otherwise we can with difficulty imagine one person not deserving to be ordered for execution, on Wednesday next, between the hours

of eight and nine ante-meridian. Happily, however, for our future peace of mind, and not improbably for the whole conformation of our character, our Guardian Genius—(every boy has one constantly at his side, both during school and play hours, though it must be confessed sometimes a little remiss in his duty, for the nature even of angelical beings is imperfect)—always so contrived it, that with all our cunning we never could kill a Cushat. Many a long hour—indeed whole Saturdays—have we lain perdue among broom and whins, the beautiful green and yellow skirting of sweet Scotia's woods, watching his egress or ingress, our gun ready cocked, and finger on trigger, that on the flapping of his wings not a moment might be lost in bringing him to the ground. But couch where we might, no Cushat ever came near our insidious lair. Now and then a Magpie—birds who, by the by, when they suspect you of any intention of shooting them, are as distant in their manners as Cushats themselves, otherwise as impudent as Cockneys—would come, hopping in continual tail-jerks, with his really beautiful plumage, if one could bring one's-self to think it so, and then sport the pensive within twenty yards of the muzzle of Brown-Bess, impatient to let fly. But our soul burned, our heart panted for a Cushat; and in that strong fever-fit of passion, could we seek to slake our thirst for that wild blood with the murder of a thievish eavesdropper of a Pye? The Blackbird, too, often dropt out of the thicket into an open glade in the hazel-shaws, and the distinctness of his yellow bill showed he was far within shot-range. Yet, let us do ourselves justice, we never in all our born days dreamt of shooting a Blackbird—him that scares away sadness from the woodland twilight gloom, at morn or eve; whose anthem, even in those dim days when Nature herself it might be well thought were melancholy, forceth the firmament to ring with joy. Once "the snow-white cony sought its evening meal," unconscious of our dangerous vicinity, issuing with erected ears from the wood edge. That last was, we confess, such a temptation to touch the trigger, that had we resisted it we must have been either more or less than boy. We fired; and kicking up his heels, doubtless in fright, but as it then seemed to us, during our disappointment, much rather in frolic—nay, absolute derision—away bounced Master Rabbit to his burrow, without one particle of soft silvery wool on sward or bush, to bear witness to our unerring aim. As if the branch on which he had been sitting were broken, away then went the crashing Cushat through the intermingling sprays. The free flapping of his wings was soon heard in the air above the tree-tops, and ere we could recover from our almost bitter amazement, the creature was murmuring to his mate on her shallow nest—a far-off murmur, solitary and profound—to reach unto which, through the tangled mazes of the forest would have required a separate sense, instinct, or faculty, which we did not possess. So, skulking out of our hiding-place, we made no comment on the remark of a homeward-plodding labourer, who had heard the report, and

now smelt the powder—"Cushats are gayan' kittle birds to kill"—but returned, with our shooting-bag as empty as our stomach, to the Manse.

"Why do the birds sing on Sunday?" said once a little boy to us—and we answered him in a lyrical ballad, which we have lost. But although the birds certainly do sing on Sunday—behaviour that with our small gentle Calvinist, who dearly loved them, caused some doubts of their being so innocent as during the week-days they appeared to be—we cannot set down their fault to the score of ignorance. Is it in the holy superstition of the world-weary heart that man believes the inferior creatures to be conscious of the calm of the Sabbath, and that they know it to be the day of our rest? Or is it that we transfer the feeling of our inward calm to all the goings-on of Nature, and thus imbue them with a character of reposing sanctity, existing only in our own spirits? Both solutions are true. The instincts of those creatures we know only in their symptoms and their effects, in the wonderful range of action over which they reign. Of the instincts themselves—as feelings or ideas—we know not any thing, nor ever can know; for an impassable gulf separates the nature of those that may be to perish, from ours that are to live for ever. But their power of memory, we must believe is not only capable of minutest retention, but also stretches back to afar—and some power or other they do possess, that gathers up the past experience into rules of conduct that guide them in their solitary or gregarious life. Why, therefore, should not the birds of Scotland know the Sabbath-day? On that day the Water-Ouzel is never disturbed by angler among the murmurs of his own water-fall; and as he flits down the banks and braes of the burn, he sees no motion, he hears no sound about the cottage that is the boundary of his furthest flight—for "the dizzying mill-wheel rests." The merry-nodding rooks, that in spring-time keep following the very heels of the ploughman—may they not know it to be Sabbath, when all the horses are standing idle in the field, or taking a gallop by themselves round the head-rigg? Quick of hearing are birds—one and all—and in every action of their lives are obedient to sounds. May they not, then—do they not connect a feeling of perfect safety with the tinkle of the small kirk-bell? The very jay himself is not shy of people on their way to worship. The magpie, that never sits more than a minute at a time in the same place on a Saturday, will on the Sabbath remain on the kirkyard wall with all the composure of a dove. The whole feathered creation know our hours of sleep. They awake before us; and ere the earliest labourer has said his prayers, have not the woods and valleys been ringing with their hymns? Why, therefore, may not they, who know, each week-day, the hour of our lying down and our rising up, know also the day of our general rest? The animals whose lot is labour, shall they not know it? Yes; the horse on that day sleeps in shade or sunshine without fear of being disturbed—his neck forgets the galling collar, "and there are forty feeding like one,"

all well knowing that their fresh meal on the tender herbage will not be broken in upon before the dews of next morning, ushering in a new day to them of toil or travel.

So much for our belief in the knowledge, instinctive or from a sort of reason, possessed, by the creatures of the inferior creation, of the heaven-appointed Sabbath to man and beast. But it is also true that we transfer our inward feelings to their outward condition, and with our religious spirit imbue all the ongoings of animated and even inanimated life. There is always a shade of melancholy, a tinge of pensiveness, a touch of pathos, in all profound rest. Perhaps because it is so much in contrast with the turmoil of our ordinary being. Perhaps because the soul, when undisturbed, will, from the impulse of its own divine nature, have high, solemn, and awful thoughts. In such state it transmutes all things into a show of sympathy with itself. The church-spire, rising high above the smoke and stir of a town, when struck by the sun-fire, seems, on market-day, a tall building in the air, that may serve as a guide to people from a distance flocking into bazaars. The same church-spire, were its loud-tongued bell to call from aloft on the gathering multitude below, to celebrate the anniversary of some great victory, Waterloo or Trafalgar, would appear to stretch up its stature triumphantly into the sky—so much the more triumphantly, if the standard of England were floating from its upper battlements. But to the devout eye of faith, doth it not seem to express its own character, when on the Sabbath it performs no other office than to point to heaven?

So much for the second solution. But independently of both, no wonder that all nature seems to rest on the Sabbath; for it doth rest—all of it, at least, that appertains to man and his condition. If the Fourth Commandment be kept—at rest is all the household—and all the fields round it are at rest. Calm flows the current of human life, on that gracious day, throughout all the glens and valleys of Scotland, as a stream that wimples in the morning sunshine, freshened but not flooded with the soft-falling rain of a summer-night. The spiral smoke-wreath above the cottage is not calmer than the motion within. True, that the wood-warblers do not cease their songs; but the louder they sing, the deeper is the stillness. And what perfect blessedness, when it is only joy that is astir in rest!

Loud-flapping Cushat! it was thou that inspiredst these solemn fancies; and we have only to wish thee, for thy part contributed to our Recreations, now that the acorns of autumn must be wellnigh consumed, many a plentiful repast, amid the multitude of thy now congregated comrades in the cleared stubble lands—as severe weather advances, and the ground becomes covered with snow, regales undisturbed by fowler, on the tops of turnip, rape, and other cruciform plants, which all of thy race affect so passionately—and soft blow the sea-breezes on thy unruflled plumage, when thou takest thy winter's walk with kindred myriads on the shelly shore, and for a season minglest with gull and seamew—apart every

tribe, one from the other, in the province of its own peculiar instinct—yet all mysteriously taught to feed or sleep together within the roar or margin of the main.

Sole-sitting Cushat! We see thee through the yew-tree's shade, on some day of the olden time, but when or where we remember not—for what has place or time to do with the vision of a dream? That we see thee is all we know, and that serenely beautiful thou art! Most pleasant is it to dream, and to know we dream! By sweet volition we keep ourselves half asleep and half awake; and all our visions of thought, as they go swimming along, partake at once of reality and imagination. Fiction and truth—clouds, shadows, phantoms and phantasms—ether, sunshine, substantial forms and sounds that have a being, blending together in a scene created by us, and partly impressed upon us, and which one motion of the head on the pillow may dissolve, or deepen into more oppressive delight! In some such dreaming state of mind are we now; and, gentle reader, if thou art awake, lay aside the visionary volume, or read a little longer, and likely enough is it that thou too mayest fall half asleep. If so, let thy drowsy eyes still pursue the glimmering paragraphs—and wafted away wilt thou feel thyself to be into the heart of a Highland forest, that knows no bounds but those of the uncertain sky.

Away from our remembrance fades the noisy world of men into a silent glimmer—and now it is all no more than a mere faint thought. On—on—on! through briery brake—matted thicket—grassy glade—On—on—on! further into the Forest! What a confusion of huge stones, rocks, knolls, all tumbled together into a chaos—not without its stern and sterile beauty! Still are there, above, blue glimpses of the sky—deep though the umbrage be, and wide-flung the arms of the oaks, and of pines in their native wilderness gigantic as oaks, and extending as broad a shadow. Now the firmament has vanished—and all is twilight. Immense stems, “in number without number numberless,”—bewildering eye and soul—all still—silent—steadfast—and so would they be in a storm. For what storm—let it range aloft as it might, till the surface of the forest toss and roar like the sea—could force its path through these many million trunks! The thunder-stone might split that giant there—how vast! how magnificent!—but the brother by his side would not tremble; and the sound—in the awful width of the silence—what more would it be than that of the woodpecker alarming the insects of one particular tree!

Poor wretch that we are!—to us the uncompanioned silence of the solitude hath become terrible. More dreadful is it than the silence of the tomb; for there, often arise responses to the unuttered soliloquies of the pensive heart. But this is as the silence, not of Time, but of Eternity. No burial heaps—no mounds—no cairns! It is not as if man had perished here, and been forgotten; but as if this were a world in which there had been neither living nor dying. Too utter is the solitariness even for the ghosts of the dead! For they are thought to haunt the burial-places of what once was their

bodies—the chamber where the spirit breathed its final farewell—the spot of its transitory love and delight, or of its sin and sorrow—to gaze with troubled tenderness on the eyes that once they worshipped—with cold ear to drink the music of the voices long ago adored; and in all their permitted visitations, to express, if but by the beckoning of the shadow of a hand, some unextinguishable longing after the converse of the upper world, even within the gates of the grave.

A change comes over us. Deep and still as is the solitude, we are relieved of our awe, and out of the forest-gloom arise images of beauty that come and go, gliding as on wings, or statue-like, stand in the glades, like the sylvan deities to whom of old belonged, by birthright, all the regions of the woods. On—on—on!—further into the Forest!—and let the awe of imagination be still further tempered by the delight breathed even from any one of the lovely names sweet-sounding through the famous fables of antiquity. Dryad, Hamadryad! Faunus! Sylvanus!—Now, alas! ye are but names, and no more! Great Pan himself is dead, or here he would set up his reign. But what right has such a dreamer to dream of the dethroned deities of Greece? The language they spoke is not his language; yet the words of the great poets who sang of gods and demigods, are beautiful in their silent meanings as they meet his adoring eyes; and, mighty Lyrists! has he not often floated down the temple-crowned and altar-shaded rivers of your great Choral Odes?

On—on—on!—further into the Forest!—unless, indeed, thou dreatest that the limbs that bear on thy fleshly tabernacle may fail, and the body, left to itself, sink down and die. Ha! such fears thou laughest to scorn; for from youth upwards thou hast dallied with the wild and perilous: and what but the chill delight in which thou hast so often shivered in threatening solitude brought thee here! These dens are not dungeons, nor are we a thrall. Yet if dungeons they must be called—and they are deep, and dark, and grim—ten thousand gates hath this great prison-house, and wide open are they all. So on—on—on!—further into the Forest! But who shall ascend to its summit? Eagles and dreams. Round its base we go, rejoicing in the new-found day, and once more cheered and charmed with the music of birds. Say whence came, ye scientific world-makers, these vast blocks of granite? Was it fire or water, think ye, that hung in the air the semblance of yon Gothic cathedral, without nave, or chancel, or aisle—a mass of solid rock? Yet it looks like the abode of Echoes; and haply when there is thunder, rolls out its lengthening shadow of sound to the ear of the solitary shepherd afar off on Cairngorm.

On—on—on!—further into the Forest! Now on all sides leagues of ancient trees surround us, and we are safe as in the grave from the persecuting love or hatred of friends or foes. The sun shall not find us by day, nor the moon by night. Were our life forfeited to what are called the laws, how could the laws discover the criminal? How could they drag us from

the impenetrable gloom of this silvan sanctuary? And if here we chose to perish by suicide or natural death—and famine is a natural death—what eye would ever look on our bones? Raving all; but so it often is with us in severest solitude—our dreams will be hideous with sin and death.

Hideous, said we, with sin and death? Thoughts that came flying against us like vultures, like vultures have disappeared, disappointed of their prey, and afraid to fix their talons in a thing alive. Hither—by some secret and sacred impulse within the soul, that often knoweth not the sovereign virtue of its own great desires—have we been led as into a penitentiary, where, before the altar of nature, we may lay down the burden of guilt or remorse, and walk out of the Forest a heaven-pardoned man. What guilt?—O my soul! canst thou think of Him who inhabiteth eternity, and ask what guilt? What remorse?—For the dereliction of duty every day since thou receivedst from Heaven the understanding of good and of evil. All our past existence gathers up into one dread conviction, that every man that is born of woman is a sinner, and worthy of everlasting death. Yet with the same dread conviction is interfused a knowledge, clear as the consciousness of present being, that the soul will live for ever. What was the meaning, O my soul! of all those transitory joys and griefs—of all those fears, hopes, loves, that so shook, each in its own fleeting season, the very foundations on which thy being in this life is laid? Anger, wrath, hatred, pride, and ambition—what are they all but so many shapes of sin coeval with thy birth? That sudden entrance of heaven's light into the Forest, was like the opening of the eye of God! And our spirit stands ashamed of its nakedness, because of the foulness and pollution of sin. But the awful thoughts that have travelled through its chambers have ventilated, swept, and cleansed them—and let us break away from beneath the weight of confession.

Conscience! Speak not of weak and fantastic fears—of abject superstitions—and of all that wild brood of dreams that have for ages been laws to whole nations; though we might speak of them—and, without violation of the spirit of true philosophy, call upon them to bear testimony to the truth. But think of the calm, purified, enlightened, and elevated conscience of the highest natures—from which objectless fear has been excluded—and which hears, in its stillness, the eternal voice of God. What calm celestial joy fills all the being of a good man, when conscience tells him he is obeying God's law! What dismal fear and sudden remorse assail him, whenever he swerves but one single step out of the right path that is shining before his feet! It is not a mere selfish terror—it is not the dread of punishment only that appals him—for, on the contrary, he can calmly look on the punishment which he knows his guilt has incurred, and almost desires that it should be inflicted, that the incensed power may be appeased. It is the consciousness of offence that is unendurable—not the fear of consequent suffering; it is

the degradation of sin that his soul deploras—it is the guilt which he would expiate, if possible, in torments; it is the united sense of wrong, sin, guilt, degradation, shame, and remorse, that renders a moment's pang of the conscience more terrible to the good than years of any other punishment—and it thus is the power of the human soul to render its whole life miserable by its very love of that virtue which it has fatally violated. This is a passion which the soul could not suffer—unless it were immortal. Reason, so powerful in the highest minds, would escape from the vain delusion; but it is in the highest minds where reason is most subjected to this awful power—they would seek reconciliation with offended Heaven by the loss of all the happiness that earth ever yielded—and would rejoice to pour out their heart's blood if it could wipe away from the conscience the stain of one deep transgression! These are not the high-wrought and delusive states of mind of religious enthusiasts, passing away with the bodily agitation of the dreamer; but they are the feelings of the loftiest of men's sons—and when the troubled spirit has escaped from their burden, or found strength to support it, the conviction of their reasonableness and of their awful reality remains; nor can it be removed from the minds of the wise and virtuous, without the obliteration from the tablets of memory of all the moral judgments which conscience has there recorded.

It is melancholy to think that even in our own day, a philosopher, and one of high name too, should have spoken slightly of the universal desire of immortality, as no argument at all in proof of it, because arising inevitably from the regret with which all men must regard the relinquishment of this life. By thus speaking of the desire as a delusion necessarily accompanying the constitution of mind which it has pleased the Deity to bestow on us, such reasoners but darken the mystery both of man and of Providence. But this desire of immortality is not of the kind they say it is, nor does it partake, in any degree, of the character of a blind and weak feeling of regret at merely leaving this present life. "I would not live away," is a feeling which all men understand—but who can endure the momentary thought of annihilation? Thousands, and tens of thousands—awful a thing as it is to die—are willing to do so—"passing through nature to eternity"—nay, when the last hour comes, death almost always finds his victim ready, if not resigned. To leave earth, and all the light both of the sun and of the soul, is a sad thought to us all—transient as are human smiles, we cannot bear to see them no more—and there is a beauty that binds us to life in the tears of tenderness that the dying man sees gushing for his sake. But between that regret for departing loves and affections, and all the gorgeous or beautiful shows of this earth—between that love and the dread of annihilation, there is no connection. The soul can bear to part with all it loves—the soft voice—the kindling smile—the starting tear—and the profoundest sighs of all by whom it is beloved; but it cannot bear to part with its existence

It cannot even believe the possibility of that which yet it may darkly dread. Its loves—its passions—its joys—its agonies are *not itself*. They may perish, but it is imperishable. Strip it of all it has seen, touched, enjoyed, or suffered—still it seems to survive—bury all it knew, or could know in the grave—but itself cannot be trodden down into the corruption. It sees nothing like itself in what perishes, except in dim analogies that vanish before its last profound self-meditation—and though it parts with its mortal weeds at last, as with a garment, its life is felt at last to be something not even in contrast with the death of the body, but to flow on like a flood, that we believe continues still to flow after it has entered into the unseen solitude of some boundless desert.

“Behind the cloud of death,

Once, I beheld a sun; a sun which gilt
That sable cloud, and turn’d it all to gold.
How the grave’s altered! fathomless as hell!
A real hell to those who dream’d of heaven,
ANNIHILATION! How it yawns before me!
Next moment I may drop from thought, from sense,
The privilege of angels and of worms,
An outcast from existence! and this spirit,
This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,
This particle of energy divine,
Which travels nature, flies from star to star,
And visits gods, and emulates their powers,
For ever is extinguish’d.”

If intellect be, indeed, doomed utterly to perish, why may not we ask God, in that deep despair which, in that case, must inevitably flow from the consciousness of those powers with which he has at once blessed and cursed us—why that intellect, whose final doom is death, and that final doom within a moment, finds no thought that can satisfy it but that of Life, and no idea in which its flight can be lost but that of Eternity? If this earth were at once the soul’s cradle and her tomb, why should that cradle have been hung amid the stars, and that tomb illumined by their eternal light? If, indeed, a child of the clay, was not this earth, with all its plains, forests, mountains, and seas, capacious enough for the dreams of that creature whose course was finally to be extinguished in the darkness of its bosom? What had we to do with planets, and suns, and spheres, “and all the dread magnificence of heaven?” Were we framed merely that we might for a few years rejoice in the beauty of the stars, as in that of the flowers beneath our feet? And ought we to be grateful for those transitory glimpses of the heavens, as for the fading splendour of the earth? But the heavens are not an idle show, hung out for the gaze of that idle dreamer Man. They are the work of the Eternal God, and he has given us power therein to read and to understand his glory. It is not our eyes only that are dazzled by the face of heaven—our souls can comprehend the laws by which that face is overspread by its celestial smiles. The dwelling-place of our spirits is already in the heavens. Well are we entitled to give names unto the stars; for we know the moment of their rising and their setting, and can be with them at every part of their shining journey through the boundless ether. While generations of men have lived, died, and are buried, the astronomer thinks of the golden orb that shone centuries ago within the

vision of man, and lifts up his eye undoubting at the very moment when it again comes glorious on its predicted return. Were the Eternal Being to slacken the course of a planet, or increase even the distance of the fixed stars, the decree would be soon known on earth. Our ignorance is great, because so is our knowledge; for it is from the mightiness and vastness of what we do know that we imagine the illimitable unknown creation. And to whom has God made these revelations? To a worm that next moment is to be in darkness? To a piece of earth momentarily raised into breathing existence? To a soul perishable as the telescope through which it looks into the gates of heaven?

“Oh! star-eyed science, hast thou wander’d there
To waft us home—the message of despair?”

No; there is no despair in the gracious light of heaven. As we travel through those orbs, we feel indeed that we have no power, but we feel that we have mighty knowledge. We can create nothing, but we can dimly understand all. It belongs to God only to *create*, but it is given to man to *know*—and that knowledge is itself an assurance of immortality.

“Renounce St. Evremont, and read St. Paul.

Ere rapt by miracle, by reason wing’d,
His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
This is freethinking, unconfined to parts,
To send the soul, on curious travel bent,
Through all the provinces of human thought:
To dart her flight through the whole sphere of man;
Of this vast universe to make the tour;
In each recess of space and time, at home;
Familiar with their wonders: diving deep;
And like a prince of boundless interests there,
Still most ambitious of the most remote;
To look on truth unbroken, and entire;
Truth in the system, the full orb; where truths;
By truths enlighten’d and sustain’d, afford
An archlike, strong foundation, to support
Th’ incumbent weight of absolute, complete
Conviction: here, the more we press, we stand
More firm; who most examine, most believe.
Parts, like half-sentences, confound: the whole
Conveys the sense, and God is understood,
Who not in fragments writes to human race.
Read his whole volume, skeptic! then reply.”

Renounce St. Evremont! Ay, and many a Deistical writer of higher repute now in the world. But how came they by the truths they did know? Not by the work of their own unassisted faculties—for they lived in a Christian country; they had already been imbued with many high and holy beliefs, of which—had they willed it—they could never have got rid; and to the very last the light which they, in their pride, believed to have emanated from the inner shrine—the penetralia of Philosophy—came from the temples of the living God. They walked all their lives long—though they knew it not, or strived to forget it—in the light of revelation, which, though often darkened to men’s eyes by clouds from earth, was still shining strong in heaven. Had the New Testament never been—think ye that men in their pride, though

“Poor sons of a day,”

could have discerned the necessity of framing for themselves a *religion of humility*? No. As by pride, we are told the angels fell—so by pride man, after his miserable fall, strove to lift up his helpless being from the dust; and though trailing himself, soul and body, along

the soiling earth, and glorying in his own corruption, sought to eternize here his very sins by naming the stars of heaven after heroes, conquerors, murderers, violators of the mandates of the Maker whom they had forgotten, or whose attributes they had debased by their own foul imaginations. They believed themselves, in the delusion of their own idolatries, to be "Lords of the world and Demigods of Fame," while they were the slaves of their own sins and their own sinful Deities. Should we have been wiser in our generation than they, but for the Bible? If in moral speculation we hear but little—too little—of the confession of what it owes to the Christian religion—in all the Philosophy, nevertheless, that is pure and of good report, we see that "the day-spring from on high has visited it." In all philosophic inquiry there is, perhaps, a tendency to the soul's exaltation of itself—which the spirit and genius of Christianity subdues. It is not sufficient to say that a natural sense of our own infirmities will do so—for seldom indeed have Deists been lowly-minded. They have talked proudly of humility. Compare their moral meditations with those of our great divines. Their thoughts and feelings are of the "earth earthy;" but when we listen to those others, we feel that their lore has been God-given.

"It is as if an angel shook his wings."

Thus has Christianity glorified Philosophy; its celestial purity is now the air in which intellect breathes. In the liberty and equality of that religion, the soul of the highest Philosopher dare not offend that of the humblest peasant. Nay, it sometimes stands rebuked before it—and the lowly dweller in the hut, or the shieling on the mountain side, or in the forest, could abash the proudest son of Science, by pointing to the Sermon of our Saviour on the Mount—and saying, "I see my duties to man and God *here!*" The religious establishments of Christianity, therefore, have done more not only to support the life of virtue, but to show all its springs and sources, than all the works of all the Philosophers who have ever expounded its principles or its practice.

Ha! what has brought thee hither, thou wide-antlered king of the red-deer of Braemar, from the spacious desert of thy hills of storm? Ere now we have beheld thee, or one stately as thee, gazing abroad, from a rock over the heather, to all the points of heaven; and soon as our figure was seen far below, leading the van of the flight thou went'st haughtily away into the wilderness. But now thou glidest softly and slowly through the gloom—no watchfulness, no anxiety in thy large beaming eyes; and, kneeling among the hoary mosses, layest thyself down in unknown fellowship with one of those human creatures, a glance of whose eye, a murmur of whose voice, would send thee belling through the forest, terrified by the flash or sound that bespoke a hostile nature wont to pursue thy race unto death.—The hunter is upon thee—away—away! Sudden as a shooting-star up springs the red-deer, and in the gloom as suddenly is lost.

On—on—on! further into the Forest!—and

now a noise as of "thunder heard remote." Waterfalls—hundreds of waterfalls sounding for ever—here—there—everywhere—among the remoter woods. Northwards one fierce torrent dashes through the centre—but no villages—only a few woodmen's shielings will appear on its banks; for it is a torrent of precipices, where the shrubs that hang midway from the cleft are out of the reach of the spray of its cataracts, even when the red Garroch is in flood.

Many hours have we been in the wilderness, and our heart yearns again for the cheerful dwellings of men. Sweet infant streamlet, that flows by our feet without a murmur, so shallow are yet thy waters—wilt thou—short as hitherto has been thy journeying—wilt thou be our guide out into the green valleys and the blue heaven, and the sight once more of the bright sunshine and the fair fleecy clouds? No other clue to the labyrinth do we seek but that small, thin, pure, transparent thread of silver, which neither bush nor brier will break, and which will wind without entanglement round the roots of the old trees, and the bases of the shaggy rocks. As if glad to escape from its savage birthplace, the small rivulet now gives utterance to a song; and sliding down shelving rocks, so low in their mossy verdure as hardly to deserve that name, glides along the almost level lawns, here and there disclosing a little hermit flower. No danger now of its being imbibed wholly by the thirsty earth; for it has a channel and banks of its own—and there is a waterfall! Thence-forwards the rivulet never loses its merry voice—and in an hour it is a torrent. What beautiful symptoms now of its approach to the edge of the Forest! Wandering lights and whispering airs are here visitants—and there the blue eye of a wild violet looking up from the ground! The glades are more frequent—more frequent open spaces cleared by the woodman's axe—and the antique Oak-Tree all alone by itself, itself a grove. The torrent may be called noble now; and that deep blue atmosphere—or say rather, that glimmer of purple air—lies over the Strath in which a great River rolls along to the Sea.

Nothing in all nature more beautiful than the boundary of a great Highland Forest. Masses of rocks thrown together in magnificent confusion, many of them lichened and weather-stained with colours gorgeous as the eyed plumage of the peacock, the lustre of the rainbow, or the barred and clouded glories of setting suns—some towering aloft with trees sown in the crevices by bird or breeze, and checkering the blue sky—others bare, black, abrupt, grim as volcanoes, and shattered as if by the lightning-stroke. Yet interspersed, places of perfect peace—circles among the tall heather, or taller lady-fern, smoothed into velvet, it is there easy to believe, by Fairies' feet—rocks where the undisturbed linnet hangs her nest among the blooming briars, all floating with dew draperies of honeysuckle alive with bees—glades green as emerald, where lie the lambs in tempered sunshine, or haply a lovely doe reposes with her fawn; and further down, where the fields half belong to the moun-

tain and half to the strath, the smoke of hidden huts—a log-bridge flung across the torrent—a hanging garden, and a little broomy knoll, with a few laughing children at play, almost as wild-looking as the wanderers of the woods!

Turn your eyes, if you can, from that lovely wilderness, and behold down along a mile-broad Strath, fed by a thousand torrents, floweth the noblest of Scotia's rivers, the strong-sweeping Spey! Let Imagination launch her canoe, and be thou a solitary steersman—for need is none of oar or sail; keep the middle course while all the groves go by, and ere the sun has sunk behind yon golden mountains—nay, mountains they are not, but a transitory pomp of clouds—thou mayest list the roaring, and behold the foaming of the Sea.

Was there ever such a descriptive dream of a coloured engraving of the Cushat, Quest, or Ring-Dove, dreamt before? Poor worn-out and glimmering candle!—whose wick of light and life in a few more flickerings will be no more—what a contrast dost thou present with thyself of eight hours ago! Then, truly, wert thou a shining light, and high aloft in the room-gloaming burned thy clear crest like a star—during its midnight silence, a *memento mori* of which our spirit was not afraid. Now thou art dying—dying—dead! Our cell is in darkness. But methinks we see another—a purer—a clearer light—one more directly from Heaven. We touch but a spring in a wooden shutter—and lo! the full blaze of day. Oh! why should we mortal beings dread that night-prison—the Grave?

DR. KITCHINER.

FIRST COURSE.

It greatly grieved us to think that Dr. Kitchiner should have died before our numerous avocations had allowed us an opportunity of dining with him, and subjecting to the test-act of our experienced palate his claims to immortality as a Cook and a Christian. The Doctor had, we know, a dread of Us—not altogether unallayed by delight; and on the dinner to Us, which he had meditated for nearly a quarter of a century, he knew and felt must have hung his reputation with posterity—his posthumous fame. We understand that there is an unfinished sketch of that Dinner among the Doctor's papers, and that the design is magnificent. Yet, perhaps, it is better for his glory that Kitchiner should have died without attempting to embody in forms the Idea of that Dinner. It might have been a failure. How liable to imperfection the *matériel* on which he would have had to work! How defective the instruments! Yes—yes!—happier far was it for the good old man that he should have fallen asleep with the undimmed idea of that unattempted Dinner in his imagination, than, vainly contending with the physical evil inherent in matter, have detected the Bishop's foot in the first course, and died of a broken heart!

"Travelling," it is remarked by our poor dear dead Doctor in his Traveller's Oracle, "is a recreation to be recommended, especially to those whose employments are sedentary—who are engaged in abstract studies—whose minds have been sunk in a state of morbid melancholy by hypochondriasis, or, by what is worst of all, a lack of domestic felicity. Nature, however, will not suffer any sudden transition; and therefore it is improper for people accustomed to a sedentary life to undertake suddenly a journey, during which they will be exposed to long and violent jolting. The case

here is the same as if one accustomed to drink water, should, all at once, begin to drink wine."

Had the Doctor been alive, we should have asked him what he meant by "long and violent jolting?" Jolting is now absolutely unknown in England, and it is of England the Doctor speaks. No doubt, some occasional jolting might still be discovered among the lanes and cross-roads; but, though violent, it could not be long: and we defy the most sedentary gentleman living to be more so, when sitting in an easy chair by his parlour fireside, than in a cushioned carriage spinning along the turnpike. But for the trees and hedges—rows all galloping by, he would never know that he was himself in motion. The truth is, that no gentleman can be said, now-a-days, to lead a sedentary life, who is not constantly travelling before the insensible touch of M'Adam. Look at the first twenty people that come towering by on the roof of a Highflier or a Defiance. What can be more sedentary? Only look at that elderly gentleman with the wig, evidently a parson, jammed in between a brace of buxom virgins on their way down to Doncaster races. Could he be more sedentary, during the psalm, in his own pulpit?

We must object, too, to the illustration of wine and water. Let no man who has been so unfortunate as to be accustomed to drink water, be afraid all at once to begin to drink wine. Let him, without fear or trembling, boldly fill bumpers to the Throne—the Navy—and the Army. These three bumpers will have made him a new man. We have no objection whatever to his drinking, in animated succession, the Apotheosis of the Whigs—the Angler's delight—the Cause of Liberty all over the World—Christopher North—Maga the Immortal. "Nature will not suffer any sudden transition!" Will she not? Look at our water drinker now! His very own mother

could not know him—he has lost all resemblance to his twin-brother, from whom, two short hours ago, you could not have distinguished him but for a slight scar on his brow—so completely is his apparent personal identity lost, that it would be impossible for him to establish an *alibi*. He sees a figure in the mirror above the chimney-piece, but has not the slightest suspicion that the rosy-faced Bachanal is himself, the water-drinker; but then he takes care to imitate the manual exercise of the phantom—lifting his glass to his lips at the very same moment, as if they were both moved by one soul.

The Doctor then wisely remarks, that it is “impossible to lay down any rule by which to regulate the number of miles a man may journey in a day, or to prescribe the precise number of ounces he ought to eat; but that nature has given us a very excellent guide in a sense of lassitude, which is as unerring in exercise as the sense of satiety is in eating.”

We say the Doctor wisely remarks, yet not altogether wisely; for the rule does not seem to hold always good either in exercise or in eating. What more common than to feel one's-self very much fatigued—quite done up as it were, and unwilling to stir hand or foot. Up goes a lark in heaven—tira-lira—or suddenly the breezes blow among the clouds, who forthwith all begin campaigning in the sky—or, quick as lightning, the sunshine in a moment resuscitates a drowned day—or tripping along, all by her happy self, to the sweet accompaniment of her joy-varied songs, the woodman's daughter passes by on her way, with a basket in her hand, to her father in the forest, who has already laid down his axe on the meridian shadow darkening one side of the straight stem of an oak, beneath whose grove might be drawn up five score of plumed chivalry! Where is your “sense of lassitude now, nature's unerring guide in exercise?” You spring up from the mossy wayside bank, and renewed both in mind and body, “rejoicing in Nature's joy,” you continue to pass over houseless moors, by small, single, solitary, straw-roofed huts, through villages gathered round Stone Cross, Elm Grove, or old Monastic Tower, till, unwearied in lith and limb, you see sunset beautifying all the west, and drop in, perhaps, among the hush of the Cottar's Saturday Night—for it is in sweet Scotland we are walking in our dream—and know not, till we have stretched ourselves on a bed of rushes or of heather, that “kind Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,” is yet among the number of our bosom friends—alas! daily diminishing beneath fate fortune, the sweeping scythe-stroke of death, or the whisper of some one poor, puny, idle, and unmeaning word!

Then, as to “the sense of satiety in eating.” It is produced in us by three platefuls of hotch-potch—and, to the eyes of an ordinary observer, our dinner would seem to be at an end. But no—strictly speaking, it is just going to begin. About an hour ago did we, standing on the very beautiful bridge of Perth, see that identical salmon, with his back-fin just visible above the translucent tide, arrowing up the Tay, bold as a bridegroom, and nothing doubt-

ing that he should spend his honeymoon among the gravel beds of Kinnaird or Moulenearn, or the rocky sofas of the Tummel, or the green marble couches of the Tilt. What has become now of “the sense of satiety in eating?” John—the castors!—mustard—vinegar—cayenne—catchup—peas and potatoes, with a very little butter—the biscuit called “rusk”—and the memory of the hotch-potch is as that of Babylon the Great. That any gigot of mutton, exquisite though much of the five-year-old blackfaced must assuredly be, can, with any rational hopes of success, contend against a haunch of venison, will be asserted by no devout lover of truth. Try the two by alternate platefuls, and you will uniformly find that you leave off after the venison. That “sense of satiety in eating,” of which Dr. Kitchiner speaks, was produced by the Tay salmon devoured above—but of all the transitory feelings of us transitory creatures on our transit through this transitory world, in which the Doctor asserts nature will not suffer any sudden transitions, the most transitory ever experienced by us is “the sense of satiety in eating.” Therefore, we have now seen it for a moment existing on the disappearance of the hotch-potch—dying on the appearance of the Tay salmon—once more noticeable as the last plate of the noble fish melted away—extinguished suddenly by the vision of the venison—again felt for an instant, and but for an instant—for a brace and a half of as fine grouse as ever expanded their voluptuous bosoms to be devoured by hungry love! Sense of satiety in eating, indeed! If you please, my dear friend, one of the backs—pungent with the most palate-piercing, stomach-stirring, heart-warming, soul-exalting of all tastes—the wild bitter-sweet.

But the Doctor returns to the subject of travelling—and fatigue. “When one begins,” he says, “to be low-spirited and dejected, to yawn often and be drowsy, when the appetite is impaired, when the smallest movement occasions a fluttering of the pulse, when the mouth becomes dry, and is sensible of a bitter taste, *seek refreshment and repose*, if you wish to *prevent illness*, already beginning to take place.” Why, our dear Doctor, illness in such a deplorable case as this, is just about to end, and death is beginning to take place. Thank Heaven, it is a condition to which we do not remember having very nearly approximated! Who ever saw us yawn! or drowsy! or with our appetite impaired, except on the withdrawal of the table-cloth! or low-spirited, but when the Glenlivet was at ebb? Who dare declare that he ever saw our mouth dry? or sensible of a bitter taste, since we gave over munching rowans? Put your finger on our wrist, at any moment you choose, from June to January, from January to June, and by its pulsation you may rectify Harrison's or Kendal's chronometer.

But the Doctor proceeds—“By raising the temperature of my room to about 65°, a broth diet, and taking a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in half a pint of warm water, and repeating it every half hour till it moves the bowels twice or thrice, and retiring to rest an hour or two

sooner than usual, I have often very speedily got rid of colds, &c."

Why, there may be no great harm in acting as above; although we should far rather recommend a scribed of the Epsoms. "A tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in half a pint of warm water, reminds one, somehow or other, of Tims. A small matter works a Cockney. It is not so easy—and that the Cockneys well know—to move the bowels of old Christopher North. We do not believe that a tea-spoonful of any thing in this world would have any serious effect on old "Ironsides." We should have no hesitation in backing him against so much corrosive sublimate. He would dine out on the day he had bolted that quantity of arsenic;—and would, we verily believe, rise triumphant from a tea-spoonful of Prussic acid.

We could mention a thousand cures for "colds, et cetera," more efficacious than a broth diet, a warm room, a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts, or early roosting. What say you, our dear Dean, to half a dozen tumblers of hot toddy? Your share of a brown jug to the same amount? Or an equal quantity, in its gradual decrease revealing deeper and deeper still the romantic Welsh scenery of the Devil's Punch-Bowl? *Adde tot* small-bearded oysters, all redolent of the salt-sea foam, and worthy, as they stud the Ambrosial brodd, to be licked off all at once by the lambent tongue of Neptune. That antiquated calumny against the character of toasted cheese—that, forsooth, it is indigestible—has been trampled under the march of mind; and, therefore, you may tuck in a pound of double Gloucester. Other patients, labouring under catarrh, may, very possibly, prefer the roasted how-towdy—or the green goose from his first stubble-field—or why not, by way of a little variety, a roasted mawkin, midway between hare and leveret, tempting as maiden between woman and girl, or, as the Eastern poet says, between a frock and a gown? Go to bed—no need of warming pans—about a quarter before one;—you will not hear that small hour strike—you will sleep sound till sunrise, sound as the Black Stone at Scone, on which the Kings of Scotland were crowned of old. And if you contrive to carry a cold about you next day, you deserve to be sent to Coventry by all sensible people—and may, if you choose, begin taking, with Tims, a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in a half-pint of warm water every half hour, till it moves your bowels twice or thrice; but if you do, be your sex, politics, or religion what they may, never shall ye be suffered to contribute even a bit of Balaam to the Magazine.

The Doctor then treats of the best Season for travelling, and very judiciously observes that it is during these months when there is no occasion for a fire—that is, just before and after the extreme heat. In winter, Dr. Kitchiner, who was a man of extraordinary powers of observation, observed, "that the ways are generally bad, and often dangerous, especially in hilly countries, by reason of the snow and ice. The days are short—a traveller comes late to his lodging, and is often forced to rise before the sun in the morning—besides, the

country, looks dismal—nature is, as it were, half dead. The summer corrects all these inconveniences." Paradoxical as this doctrine may at first sight appear—yet we have verified it by experience—having for many years found, without meeting with one single exception, that the fine, long, warm days of summer are an agreeable and infallible corrective of the inconveniences attending the foul, short, cold days of winter—a season which is surly without being sincere, blustering rather than bold—an intolerable bore—always pretending to be taking his leave, yet domiciliating himself in another man's house for weeks together—and, to be plain, a season so regardless of truth, that nobody believes him till frost has hung an ice-padlock on his mouth, and his many-river'd voice is dumb under the wreathed snows.

"Cleanliness when travelling," observes the Doctor, "is doubly necessary; to sponge the body every morning with tepid water, and then rub it dry with a rough towel, will greatly contribute to preserve health. To put the feet into warm water for a couple of minutes just before going to bed, is very refreshing, and inviting to sleep; for promoting tranquillity, both mental and corporeal, a clean skin may be regarded as next in efficacy to a clear conscience."

Far be it from us to seek to impugn such doctrine. A dirty dog is a nuisance not to be borne. But here the question arises—who—what—is a dirty dog? Now there are men (no women) naturally—necessarily—dirty. They are not dirty by chance—or accident—say twice or thrice per diem; but they are always dirty—at all times and in all places—and never and nowhere more disgustingly so than when figged out for going to church. It is in the skin, in the blood—in the flesh, and in the bone—that with such the disease of dirt more especially lies. We beg pardon, no less in the hair. Now, such persons do not know that they are dirty—that they are unclean beasts. On the contrary, they often think themselves pinks of purity—incarnations of carnations—impersonations of moss-roses—the spiritual essences of lilies, "imparadised in form of that sweet flesh." Now, were such persons to change their linen every half hour, night and day, that is, were they to put on forty-eight clean shirts in the twenty-four hours—and it might not be reasonable, perhaps, to demand more of them under a government somewhat too whiggish—yet though we cheerfully grant that one and all of the shirts would be dirty, we as sulkily deny that at any given moment from sunrise to sunset, and over again, the wearer would be clean. He would be just every whit and bit as dirty as if he had known but one single shirt all his life—and firmly believed his to be the only shirt in the universe.

Men again, on the other hand, there are—and thank God, in great numbers—who are naturally so clean, that we defy you to make them *bonâ fide* dirty. You may as well drive down a duck into a dirty puddle, and expect lasting stains on its pretty plumage. Pope says the same thing of swans—that is, Poets—when speaking of Aaron Hill diving into the ditch—

"He bears no tokens of the sabler streams,
But soars far off among the swans of Thames."

Pleasant people of this kind of constitution you see going about of a morning rather in dishabille—hair uncombed haply—face and hands even unwashed—and shirt with a somewhat day-before-yesterdayish hue. Yet are they, so far from being dirty, at once felt, seen, and smelt, to be among the very cleanest of her Majesty's subjects. The moment you shake hands with them, you feel in the firm flesh of palm and finger that their heart's-blood circulates purely and freely from the point of the highest hair on the apex of the pericranium, to the edge of the nail on the large toe of the right foot. Their eyes are as clear as unclouded skies—the apples on their cheeks are like those on the tree—what need, in either case, of rubbing off dust or dew with a towel? What though, from sleeping without a night-cap, their hair may be a little toosey? It is not dim—dull—oily—like half-withered seaweeds! It will soon comb itself with the fingers of the west wind—that tent-like tree its toilette—its mirror that pool of the clear-flowing Tweed.

Some streams, just like some men, are always dirty—you cannot possibly tell why—unproducible to good pic-nic society either in dry or wet weather. In dry, the oozy wretches are weeping among the slippery weeds, infested with eels and powheads. In wet, they are like so many common sewers, strewn with dead cats and broken crockery, and threatening with their fierce fulzie to pollute the sea. The sweet, soft, pure rains, soon as they touch the flood are changed into filth. The sun sees his face in one of the pools, and is terrified out of his senses. He shines no more that day. The clouds have no notion of being caricatured, and the trees keep cautiously away from the brink of such streams—save, perchance, now and then, here and there, a weak, well-meaning willow—a thing of shreds and patches—its leafless wands covered with bits of old worsted stockings, crowns of hats, a bauchle, (see Dr. Jamieson,) and the remains of a pair of corduroy breeches, long hereditary in the family of the Blood-Royal of the Yetholm Gipsies.

Some streams, just like some men, are always clean—you cannot well tell why—producible to good pic-nic society either in dry or wet weather. In dry, the pearly waters are singing among the freshened flowers—so that the trout, if he chooses, may breakfast upon bees. In wet, they grow, it is true, dark and drumly—and at midnight, when heaven's candles are put out, loud and oft the angry spirit of the water shrieks. But Aurora beholds her face in the clarified pools and shallows—far and wide glittering with silver or with gold. All the banks and braes re-appear green as emerald from the subsiding current—into which look with the eye of an angler, and you behold a Fish—a twenty pounder—steading himself—like an uncertain shadow; and oh! for George Scougal's leister to strike him through the spine! Yes, these are the images of trees, far down as if in another world; and whether you look up or look down, alike in all its blue,

braided, and unbounded beauty, is the morning sky!

Irishmen are generally men of the kind thus illustrated—generally sweet—at least in their own green Isle; and that was the best argument in favour of Catholic Emancipation.—So are Scotsmen. Whereas, blindfolded, take a London, Edinburgh, or Glasgow Cockney's hand, immediately after it has been washed and scented, and put it to your nose—and you will begin to be apprehensive that some practical wit has substituted in lieu of the sonnet-scribbling bunch of little fetid fives, the body of some chicken-butcher of a weasel, that died of the plague. We have seen as much of what is most ignorantly and malignantly denominated dirt—one week's earth—washed off the feet of a pretty young girl on a Saturday night, at a single sitting in the little rivulet that runs almost round about her father's hut, as would have served him to raise his mignonette in, or his crop of cresses. How beautifully glowed the crimson snow of the singing creature's new washed feet! First as they shone almost motionless beneath the lucid waters—and then, fearless of the hard bent and rough roots of the heather, bore the almost alarming Fairy dancing away from the eyes of the stranger; till the courteous spirit that reigns over all the Highland wilds arrested her steps knee-deep in bloom, and bade her bow her auburn head, as blushing, she faltered forth, in her sweet Gaelic accents, a welcome that thrilled like a blessing through the heart of the Sassenach, nearly benighted, and wearied sore with the fifty glorious mountain-miles that intermit at times their frowning forests from the correis of Cruachan to the cliffs of Cairngorm.

It will be seen from these hurried remarks, that there is more truth than, perhaps, Dr. Kitchiner was aware of, in his apothegm—"that a clean skin may be regarded as next in efficacy to a clear conscience." But the Doctor had but a very imperfect notion of the meaning of the words "clean skin"—his observation being not even skin-deep. A wash-hand basin, a bit of soap, and a coarse towel, he thought would give a Cockney on Ludgate-hill a clean skin—just as many good people think that a Bible, a prayer-book, and a long sermon, can give a clear conscience to a criminal in Newgate. The cause of the evil, in both cases, lies too deep for tears. Millions of men and women pass through nature to eternity clean-skinned and pious—with slight expense either in soap or sermons; while millions more, with much weekday bodily scrubbing, and much Sabbath spiritual sanctification, are held in bad odour here, while they live, by those who happen to sit near them, and finally go out like the stink of a candle.

Never stir, quoth the Doctor, "without paper, pen, and ink, and a note-book in your pocket. Notes made by pencils are easily obliterated by the motion of travelling. Commit to paper whatever you see, hear, or read, that is remarkable, with your sensations on observing it—do this upon the spot, if possible, at the moment it first strikes you—at all events do not delay it beyond the first convenient opportunity."

Suppose all people behaved in this way—and what an absurd world we should have of it—every man, woman, and child who could write, jotting away at their note-books! This committing to paper of whatever you see, hear, or read, has, among many other bad effects, this one especially—in a few years it reduces you to a state of idiocy. The memory of all men who commit to paper becomes regularly extinct, we have observed, about the age of thirty. Now, although the Memory does not bear a very brilliant reputation among the faculties, a man finds himself very much at a stand who is unprovided with one; for the Imagination, the Judgment, and the Reason walk off in search of the Memory—each in opposite directions; and the Mind, left at home by itself, is in a very awkward predicament—gets comatose—snores loudly, and expires. For our own part, we would much rather lose our Imagination and our Judgment—nay, our very Reason itself—than our Memory—provided we were suffered to retain a little Feeling and a little Fancy. Committers to paper forget that the Memory is a tablet, or they carelessly fling that mysterious tablet away, soft as wax to receive impressions, and harder than adamant to retain and put their trust in a bit of calf-skin, or a bundle of old rags.

The observer who instantly jots down every object he sees, never, properly speaking, saw an object in his life. There has always been in the creature's mind a feeling alien to that which the object would, of its pure self, have excited. The very preservation of a sort of style in the creature's remarks, costs him an effort which disables him from understanding what is before him, by dividing the small attention of which he might have been capable, between the jotting, the jotter, and the thing jotted. Then your committer to paper of whatever he sees, hears, or reads, forgets or has never known that all real knowledge, either of men or things, must be gathered up by operations which are in their very being spontaneous and free—the mind being even unconscious of them as they are going on—while the edifice has all the time been silently rising up under the unintermitting labours of those silent workers—Thoughts; and is finally seen, not without wonder, by the Mind or Soul itself, which, gentle reader, was all along Architect and Foreman—had not only originally planned, but had even daily superintended the building of the Temple.

Were Dr. Kitchiner not dead, we should just put to him this simple question—Could you, Doctor, not recollect all the dishes of the most various dinner at which you ever assisted, down to the obscurest kidney, without committing every item to your note-book? Yes, Doctor, you could. Well, then, all the universe is but one great dinner. Heaven and earth, what a show of dishes! From a sun to a salad—a moon to a mutton-chop—a comet to a curry—a planet to a pâté! What gross ingratitude to the Giver of the feast, not to be able, with the memory he has given us, to remember his bounties! It is true, what the Doctor says, that notes made with pencils

are easily obliterated by the motion of travelling; but, then, Doctor, notes made by the Mind herself, with the Ruby Pen Nature gives all her children who have also discourse of Reason, are with the slightest touch, easilier far than glass by the diamond, traced on the tablets that disease alone seems to deface, death alone to break, but which, ineffaceable, and not to be broken, shall with all their miscellaneous inscriptions endure for ever—yea, even to the great Day of Judgment.

If men will but look and listen, and feel and think—they will never forget any thing worth being remembered. Do we forget “our children, that to our eyes are dearer than the sun?” Do we forget our wives—unreasonable and almost downright disagreeable as they sometimes will be? Do we forget our triumphs—our defeats—our ecstasies, our agonies—the face of a dear friend, or “dearest foe”—the ghostlike voice of conscience at midnight arraigning us of crimes—or her seraph hymn, at which the gates of heaven seem to expand for us that we may enter in among the white-robed spirits, and

“Summer high in bliss upon the hills of God?”

What are all the jottings that ever were jotted down on his jot-book, by the most inveterate jotter that ever reached a raven age, in comparison with the Library of Useful Knowledge, that every man—who is a man—carries within the Ratchiffe—the Bodleian of his own breast!

What are you grinning at in the corner there, you little ugly Beelzebub of a Printer's Devil? and have you dropped through a seam in the ceiling? More copy do you want! There, you imp—vanished like a thought!

SECOND COURSE.

ABOVE all things, continues Dr. Kitchiner, “avoid travelling through the night, which, by interrupting sleep, and exposing the body to the night air, is always prejudicial, even in the mildest weather, and to the strongest constitutions.” Pray, Doctor, what ails you at the night air? If the night air be, even in the mildest weather, prejudicial to the strongest constitutions, what do you think becomes of the cattle on a thousand hills? Why don't all the bulls in Bashan die of the asthma—or look interesting by moonlight in a galloping consumption? Nay, if the night air be so very fatal, how do you account for the longevity of owls? Have you never read of the Chaldean shepherds watching the courses of the stars? Or, to come nearer our own times, do you not know that every blessed night throughout the year, thousands of young lads and lasses meet, either beneath the milk-white thorn—or on the lea-rig, although the night be ne'er sae wet, and they be ne'er sae weary—or under a rock on the hill—or—no uncommon case—beneath a frozen stack—not of chimneys, but of corn-sheaves—or on a couch of snow—and that they are all as warm as so many pies; while, instead of feeling what you call “the

lack of vigour attendant on the loss of sleep, which is as enfeebling and as distressing as the languor that attends the want of food," they are, to use a homely Scotch expression, "neither to haud nor bind;" the eyes of the young lads being all as brisk, bold, and bright as the stars in Charles's Wain, while those of the young lasses shine with a soft, faint, obscure, but beautiful lustre, like the dewy Pleiades, over which nature has insensibly been breathing a mist almost waving and wavering into a veil of clouds!

Have you, our dear Doctor, no compassion for those unfortunate blades, who, *nolentes volentes*, must remain out perennially all night—we mean the blades of grass, and also the flowers? Their constitutions seem often far from strong; and shut your eyes on a frosty night, and you will hear them—we have done so many million times—shivering, ay, absolutely shivering under their coat of hoar-frost! If the night air be indeed what Dr. Kitchiner has declared it to be—Lord have mercy on the vegetable world! What agonies in that field of turnips! Alas, poor Swedes! The imagination recoils from the condition of that club of winter cabbages—and of what materials, pray, must the heart of that man be made, who could think but for a moment on the case of those carrots, without bursting into a flood of tears!

The Doctor avers that the firm health and fine spirits of persons who live in the country, are not more from breathing a purer air, than from enjoying plenty of sound sleep; and the most distressing misery of "this Elysium of bricks and mortar," is the rareness with which we enjoy "the sweets of a slumber unbroke."

Doctor—in the first place, it is somewhat doubtful whether or not persons who live in the country have firmer health and finer spirits than persons who live in towns—even in London. What kind of persons do you mean? You must not be allowed to select some dozen or two of the hairiest among the curates—a few chosen rectors whose faces have been but lately elevated to the purple—a team of prebends issuing sleek from their golden stalls—a picked bishop—a sacred band the élite of the squirearchy—with a corresponding sprinkling of superior noblemen from lords to dukes—and then to compare them, cheek by jowl, with an equal number of external objects taken from the common run of Cockneys. This, Doctor, is manifestly what you are etting at—but you must clap your hand, Doctor, without discrimination, on the great body of the rural population of England, male and female, and take whatever comes first—be it a poor, wrinkled, toothless, blear-eyed, palsied hag, tottering horizontally on a staff, under the load of a premature old age, (for she is not yet fifty,) brought on by annual rheumatism and perennial poverty;—Be it a young, ugly, unmarried woman, far advanced in pregnancy, and sullenly trooping to the alehouse, to meet the overseer of the parish poor, who, enraged with the unborn bastard, is about to force the parish bully to marry the parish prostitute;—Be it a landlord of a rural inn, with pig eyes peering over his ruby cheeks, the whole machinery of

his mouth so deranged by tipping that he simultaneously snorts, stutters, slavers and snores—pot-bellied—shanked like a spindle—strae—and bidding fair to be buried on or before Saturday week;—Be it a half-drunk horse-cowper, swinging to and fro in a wrapascall on a bit of broken-down blood that once won a fifty, every sentence, however short, having but two intelligible words, an oath and a lie—his heart rotten with falsehood, and his bowels burned up with brandy, so that sudden death may pull him from his saddle before he put spurs to his sporting filly that she may balk the turnpike man, and carry him more speedily home to beat or murder his poor, pale, industrious char-woman of a wife;—Be it—not a beggar, for beggars are prohibited from this parish—but a pauper in the sulks, dying on her pittance from the poor-rates, which altogether amount in merry England but to about the paltry sum of, more or less, six millions a year—her son, all the while, being in a thriving way as a general merchant in the capital of the parish, and with clear profits from his business of £300 per annum, yet suffering the mother that bore him, and suckled him, and washed his childish hands, and combed the bumpkin's hair, and gave him Epsoms in a cup when her dear Johnny-raw had the belly-ache, to go down, step by step, as surely and as obviously as one is seen going down a stair with a feeble hold of the banisters, and stumbling every footfall, down that other flight of steps that consist of flags that are mortal damp and mortal cold, and lead to nothing but a parcel of rotten planks, and overhead a vault dripping with perpetual moisture, green and slobbery, such as toads delight in crawling heavily through with now and then a bloated leap, and hideous things more worm-like, that go wriggling briskly in and out among the refuse of the coffins, and are heard, by imagination at least, to emit faint angry sounds, because the light of day has hurt their eyes, and the air from the upper world weakened the rank savoury smell of corruption, clothing, as with a pall, all the inside walls of the tombs;—Be it a man yet in the prime of life as to years, six feet and an inch high, and measuring round the chest forty-eight inches, (which is more, reader, than thou dost by six, we bet a sovereign, member although thou even be'st of the Edinburgh Six Feet Club,) to whom Washington Irving's Jack Tibbuts was but a Tims—but then ever so many game-keepers met him all alone in my lord's pheasant preserve, and though two of them died within the month, two within the year, and two are now in the workhouse—one a mere idiot, and the other a madman—both shadows—so terribly were their bodies mauled, and so sorely were their skulls fractured;—yet the poacher was taken, tried, hulked; and there he sits now, sunning himself on a bank by the edge of a wood whose haunts he must thread no more—for the keepers were grim bone-breakers enough in their way—and when they had gotten him on his back, one gouged him like a Yankee, and the other bit off his nose like a Bolton Trotter—and one smashed his *os frontis* with the nailed heel of a two-pound

wooden clog, a Preston Purrer;—so that Master Allonby is now far from being a beauty, with a face of that description attached to a head wagging from side to side under a powerful palsy, while the Mandarin drinks damnation to the Lord of the Manor in a horn of eleemosynary ale, handed to him by the village blacksmith, in days of old not the worst of the gang, and who, but for a stupid jury, a merciful judge, and something like prevarication in the circumstantial evidence, would have been hanged for a murderer—as he was—dissected, and hung in chains;—Be it a red-haired woman, with a pug nose, small fiery eyes, high cheekbones, bulging lips, and teeth like swine-tusks,—bearded—flat-breasted as a man—tall, scrambling in her gait, but swift, and full of wild motions in her weather-withered arms, all starting with sinews like whipcord—the Pedestrian Post to and fro the market town twelve miles off—and so powerful a pugilist that she hit Grace Maddox senseless in seven minutes—tried before she was eighteen for child-murder, but not hanged, although the man-child, of which the drab was self-delivered in a ditch, was found with blue finger-marks on its wind-pipe, bloody mouth, and eyes forced out of their sockets, buried in the dunghill behind her father's hut—not hanged, because a surgeon, originally bred a sow-gelder, swore that he believed the mother had unconsciously destroyed her offspring in the throes of travail, if indeed it had ever breathed, for the lungs would not swim, he swore, in a basin of water—so the incestuous murderess was let loose; her brother got hanged in due time after the mutiny at the Nore—and her father, the fishmonger—why, he went red raving mad as if a dog had bitten him—and died, as the same surgeon and sow-gelder averred, of the hydrophobia, foaming at the mouth, gnashing his teeth, and some said cursing, but that was a calumny, for something seemed to be the matter with his tongue, and he could not speak, only splutter—nobody venturing, except his amiable daughter—and in that particular act of filial affection she was amiable—to hold in the article of death the old man's head;—Be it that moping idiot that would sit, were she suffered, on, on, on—night and day for ever, on the selfsame spot, whatever that spot might be on which she happened to squat at morning, mound, wall, or stone—motionless, dumb, and, as a stranger would think, also blind, for the eyelids are still shut—never opened in sun or storm;—yet that figure—that which is now, and has for years been, an utter and hopeless idiot, was once a gay, laughing, dancing, singing girl, whose blue eyes seemed full of light, whether they looked on earth or heaven, the flowers or the stars—her sweet-heart—a rational young man, it would appear—having leapt out upon her suddenly, as she was passing through the churchyard at night, from behind a tomb-stone in a sack which she, having little time for consideration, and being naturally superstitious, supposed to be a shroud, and the wearer thereof, who was an active stripling of sound flesh and blood, to be a ghost or skeleton, all one horrid rattle of bones; so that the trick succeeded far beyond the most sanguine ex-

pectation of the Tailor who played the principal part—and sense, feeling, memory, imagination, and reason, were all felled by one blow of fear—as butcher felleth ox—while by one of those mysteries, which neither we, nor you, nor anybody else, can understand, life remained not only unimpaired, but even invigorated; and there she sits, like a clock wound up to go a certain time, the machinery of which being good, has not been altogether deranged by the shock that sorely cracked the case, and will work till the chain is run down, and then it will tick no more;—Be it that tall, fair, lovely girl, so thin and attenuated that all wonder she can walk by herself—that she is not blown away even by the gentle summer breeze that woos the hectic of her cheek—dying all see—and none better than her poor old mother—and yet herself thoughtless of the coming doom, and cheerful as a nest-building bird—while her lover, too deep in despair to be betrayed into tears, as he carries her to her couch, each successive day feels the dear and dreadful burden lighter and lighter in his arms. Small strength will it need to support her bier! The coffin, as if empty, will be lowered unfelt by the hands that hold those rueful cords!

In mercy to our readers and ourselves, we shall endeavour to prevent ourselves from pursuing this argument any further—and perhaps quite enough has been said to show that Dr. Kitchiner's assertion, that persons who live in the country have firmer health and finer spirits than the inhabitants of towns—is exceedingly problematical. But even admitting the fact to be as the Doctor has stated it, we do not think he has attributed the phenomenon to the right cause. He attributes it to "their enjoying plenty of sound sleep." The worthy Doctor is entirely out in his conjecture. The working classes in the country enjoy, we don't doubt it, sound sleep—but not plenty of it. They have but a short allowance of sleep—and whether it be sound or not, depends chiefly on themselves; while as to the noises in towns and cities, they are nothing to what one hears in the country—unless, indeed, you perversely prefer private lodgings at a pewterer's. Did we wish to be personal, we could name a single waterfall who, even in dry weather, keeps all the visitors from town awake within a circle of four miles diameter; and in wet weather, not only keeps them all awake, but impresses them with a constantly recurring conviction during the hours of night, that there is something seriously amiss about the foundation of the river, and that the whole parish is about to be overflowed, up to the battlements of the old castle that overlooks the linn. Then, on another point, we are certain—namely, that rural thunder is many hundred times more powerful than villatic. London porter is above admiration—but London thunder below contempt. An ordinary hackney-coach beats it hollow. But, my faith! a thunder-storm in the country—especially if it be mountainous, with a few fine Woods and Forests, makes you inevitably think of that land from whose bourne no traveller returns; and even our town readers will acknowledge that country thunder much more frequently proves mortal than the

thunder you meet with in cities. In the country, few thunder-storms are contented to pass over without killing at least one horse, some milch-kine, half-a-dozen sucking pigs or turkeys, an old woman or two, perhaps the Minister of the parish, a man about forty, name unknown, and a nursing mother at the ingle, the child escaping with singed eye-brows, and a singular black mark on one of its great toes. We say nothing of the numbers stupified, who awake the day after, as from a dream, with strange pains in their heads, and not altogether sure about the names or countenances of the somewhat unaccountable people whom they see variously employed about the premises, and making themselves pretty much at home. In towns, not one thunder-storm in fifty that performs an exploit more magnanimous than knocking down an old wife from a chimney-top—singeing a pair of worsted stockings that, knit in an ill-starr'd hour, when the sun had entered Aries, had been hung out to dry on a line in the back-yard, or garden as it is called—or cutting a few inches off the tail of an old whig weathercock that for years had been pecking the eyes out of all the airts the wind can blow, greedy of some still higher preference.

Our dear deceased author proceeds to tell his Traveller how to eat and drink; and remarks, "that people are apt to imagine that they may indulge a little more in high living when on a journey. Travelling itself, however, acts as a stimulus; therefore less nourishment is required than in a state of rest. What you might not consider intemperate at home, may occasion violent irritation, fatal inflammations, &c., in situations where you are least able to obtain medical assistance."

All this is very loosely stated, and must be set to rights. If you shut yourself up for some fifty hours or so in a mail-coach, that keeps wheeling along at the rate of ten miles an hour, and changes horses in half a minute, certainly for obvious reasons the less you eat and drink the better; and perhaps an hourly hundred drops of laudanum, or equivalent grain of opium, would be advisable, so that the transit from London to Edinburgh might be performed in a phantasma. But the free agent ought to live well on his travels—some degrees better, without doubt, than when at home. People seldom live very well at home. There is always something requiring to be eaten up, that it may not be lost, which destroys the soothing and satisfactory symmetry of an unexceptionable dinner. We have detected the same duck through many unprincipled disguises, playing a different part in the farce of domestic economy, with a versatility hardly to have been expected in one of the most generally despised of the web-footed tribe. When travelling at one's own sweet will, one feeds at a different inn every meal; and, except when the coincidence of circumstances is against you, there is an agreeable variety both in the natural and artificial disposition of the dishes. True that travelling may act as a stimulus—but false that therefore less nourishment is required. Would Dr. Kitchiner, if now alive, presume to say that it was right for

him, who had sat all day with his feet on the fender, to gobble up, at six o'clock of the afternoon, as enormous a dinner as we who had walked since sunrise forty or fifty miles? Because our stimulus had been greater, was our nourishment to be less? We don't care a curse about stimulus. What we want, in such a case, is lots of fresh food; and we hold that, under such circumstances, a man with a sound Tory Church-and-King stomach and constitution cannot over-eat himself—no, not for his immortal soul.

We had almost forgot to take the deceased Doctor to task for one of the most free-and-easy suggestions ever made to the ill-disposed, how to disturb and destroy the domestic happiness of eminent literary characters. "An introduction to eminent authors may be obtained," quoth he slyly, "from the booksellers who publish their works."

The booksellers who publish the works of eminent authors have rather more common sense and feeling, it is to be hoped, than this comes to—and know better what is the province of their profession. Any one man may, if he chooses, give any other man an introduction to any third man in this world. Thus the tailor of any eminent author—or his bookseller—or his parish minister—or his butcher—or his baker—or his "man of business"—or his house-builder—may, one and all, give such travellers as Dr. Kitchiner and others, letters of introduction to the said eminent author in prose or verse. This, we have heard, is sometimes done—but fortunately we cannot speak from experience, not being ourselves an eminent author. The more general the intercourse between men of taste, feeling, cultivation, learning, genius, the better; but that intercourse should be brought about freely and of its own accord, as fortunate circumstances permit, and there should be no impertinent interference of selfish or benevolent go-betweens. It would seem that Dr. Kitchiner thought the commonest traveller, one who was almost, as it were, bordering on a Bagman, had nothing to do but call on the publisher of any great writer, and get a free admission into his house. Had the Doctor not been dead, we should have given him a severe rowing and blowing-up for this vulgar folly; but as he is dead, we have only to hope that the readers of the Oracle who intend to travel will not degrade themselves, and disgust "authors of eminence," by thrusting their ugly or comely faces—both are equally odious—into the privacy of gentlemen who have done nothing to exclude themselves from the protection of the laws of civilized society—or subject their firesides to be infested by one-half of the curious men of the country, two-thirds of the clever, and all the blockheads.

THIRD COURSE.

HAVING thus briefly instructed travellers how to get a look at Lions, the Doctor suddenly exclaims—"IMPRIMIS, BEWARE OF DOGS!" "There have," he says, "been many arguments, *pro*

and *con*, on the dreadful disease their bite produces—it is enough to prove that multitudes of men, women, and children have died in consequence of having been bitten by dogs. What does it matter whether they were the victims of bodily disease or mental irritation? The life of the most humble human being is of more value than all the dogs in the world—dare the most brutal cynic say otherwise?"

Dr. Kitchiner always travelled, it appears, in chaises; and a chaise of one kind or other he recommends to all his brethren of mankind. Why, then, this intense fear of the canine species? Who ever saw a mad dog leap into the mail-coach, or even a gig? The creature, when so afflicted, hangs his head, and goes snapping right and left at pedestrians. Poor people like us, who must walk, may well fear hydrophobia—though, thank Heaven, we have never, during the course of a tolerably long and well-spent life, been so much as once bitten by "the rabid animal!" But what have rich authors, who loll in carriages, to dread from dogs, who always go on foot? We cannot credit the very sweeping assertion, that multitudes of men, women, and children have died in consequence of being bitten by dogs. Even the newspapers do not run up the amount above a dozen per annum, from which you may safely deduct two-thirds. Now, four men, women and children, are not "a multitude." Of those four, we may set down two as problematical—having died, it is true, *in*, but not of hydrophobia—states of mind and body wide as the poles asunder. He who drinks two bottles of pure spirit every day he buttons and unbuttons his breeches, generally dies in a state of hydrophobia—for he abhorred water, and knew instinctively the jug containing that insipid element. But he never dies at all of hydrophobia, there being evidence to prove that for twenty years he had drunk nothing but brandy. Suppose we are driven to confess the other two—why, one of them was an old woman of eighty, who was dying as fast as she could hobble, at the very time she thought herself bitten—and the other a nine-year-old brat, in hooping-cough and measles, who, had there not been such a quadruped as a dog created, would have worried itself to death before evening, so lamentably had its education been neglected, and so dangerous an accomplishment is an impish temper. The twelve cases for the year of that most horrible disease, hydrophobia, have, we flatter ourselves, been satisfactorily disposed of—eight of the alleged deceased being at this moment engaged at various handicrafts, on low wages indeed, but still such as enable the industrious to live—two having died of drinking—one of extreme old age, and one of a complication of complaints incident to childhood, their violence having, in this particular instance, been aggravated by neglect and a devilish temper. Where now the "multitude" of men, women, and children, who have died in consequence of being bitten by mad dogs?

Gentle reader—a mad dog is a bugbear; we have walked many hundred times the diameter and the circumference of this our habitable globe—along all roads, public and private—

with stiles or turnpikes—metropolitan streets and suburban paths—and at all seasons of the revolving year and day; but never, as we padded the hoof along, met we nor were overtaken by greyhound, mastiff, or cur, in a state of hydrophobia. We have many million times seen them with their tongues lolling out about a yard—their sides pating—flag struck—and the whole dog showing symptoms of severe distress. That such travellers were not mad, we do not assert—they may have been mad—but they certainly were fatigued; and the difference, we hope, is often considerable between weariness and insanity. Dr. Kitchiner, had he seen such dogs as we have seen, would have fainted on the spot. He would have raised the country against the harmless jog-trotter. Pitchforks would have gleamed in the setting sun, and the flower of the agricultural youth of a midland country, forming a *levy en masse*, would have offered battle to a turnspit. The Doctor, sitting in his coach—like Napoleon at Waterloo—would have cried "*Tout est perdu—sauve qui peut!*"—and re-galloping to a provincial town, would have found refuge under the gateway of the Hen and Chickens.

"The life of the most humble human being," quoth the Doctor, "is of more value than all the dogs in the world—dare the most brutal cynic say otherwise?"

This question is not put to us; for so far from being the most brutal Cynic, we do not belong to the Cynic school at all—being an Eclectic, and our philosophy composed chiefly of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Peripateticism—with a fine, pure, clear, bold dash of Platonism. The most brutal Cynic, if now alive and snarling, must therefore answer for himself—while we tell the Doctor, that so far from holding, with him, that the life of the most humble human being is of more value than all the dogs in the world, we, on the contrary, verily believe that there is many an humble dog whose life far transcends in value the lives of many men, women, and children. Whether or not dogs have souls, is a question in philosophy never yet solved; although we have our selves no doubt on the subject, and firmly believe that they have souls. But the question, as put by the Doctor, is not about souls, but about lives; and as the human soul does not die when the human body does, the death of an old woman, middle-aged man, or young child, is no such very great calamity, either to themselves or to the world. Better, perhaps, that all the dogs now alive should be massacred, to prevent hydrophobia, than that a human soul should be lost;—but not a single human soul is going to be lost, although the whole canine species should become insane to-morrow. Now, would the Doctor have laid one hand on his heart and the other on his Bible, and taken a solemn oath that rather than that one old woman of a century and a quarter should suddenly be cut off by the bite of a mad dog, he would have signed the warrant of execution of all the packs of harriers and fox-hounds, all the pointers, spaniels, setters, and cockers, all the stag-hounds, greyhounds, and lurchers, all the Newfoundlanders, shepherd-dogs, mastiffs, bull-dogs, and terriers, the

infinite generation of mongrels and crosses included, in Great Britain and Ireland—to say nothing of the sledge-drawers in Kamschatka, and in the realms slow-moving near the Pole? To clench the argument at once—What are all the old women in Europe, one-half of the men, and one-third of the children, when compared, in value, with any one of Christopher North's Newfoundland dogs—Fro—Bronte—or O'Bronte? Finally, does he include in his sweeping condemnation the whole brute creation, lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotami, camelopardales, zebras, quaggas, cattle, horses, asses, mules, cats, the ichneumon, cranes, storks, cocks-of-the-wood, geese, and how-towdies?

"Semi-drowning in the sea"—he continues—"and all the pretended specifics, are mere delusions—there is no real remedy but cutting the part out immediately. If the bite be near a bloodvessel, that cannot always be done, nor when done, however well done, will it always prevent the miserable victim from dying the most dreadful of deaths. Well might St. Paul tell us to 'beware of dogs.' First Epistle to Philippians, chap. iii. v. 2."

Semi-drowning in the sea is, we grant, a bad specific, and difficult to be administered. It is not possible to tell, *a priori*, how much drowning any particular patient can bear. What is mere semi-drowning to James, is total drowning to John;—Tom is easy of resuscitation;—Bob will not stir a muscle for all the Humane Societies in the United Kingdoms. To cut a pound of flesh from the rump of a fat dowager, who turns sixteen stone, is within the practical skill of the veriest bungler in the anatomy of the human frame—to scarify the fleshless spindle-shank of an antiquated spinstress, who lives on a small annuity, might be beyond the scalpel of an Abernethy or a Liston. A large bloodvessel, as the Doctor well remarks, is an awkward neighbour to the wound made by the bite of a mad dog, "when a new excision has to be attempted"—but will any Doctor living inform us how, in a thousand other cases besides hydrophobia, "the miserable victim may always be prevented from dying?" There are, probably, more dogs in Britain than horses; yet a hundred men, women, and children are killed by kicks of sane horses, for one by bites of insane dogs. Is the British army, therefore, to be deprived of its left arm, the cavalry? Is there to be no flying artillery? What is to become of the horse-marines?

Still the Doctor, though too dogmatical, and rather puppyish above, is, at times, sensible on dogs.

"Therefore," quoth he, "never travel without a good tough Black Thorn in your Fist, not less than three feet in length, on which may be marked the Inches, and so it may serve for a measure.

"Pampered Dogs, that are permitted to prance about as they please, when they hear a knock, scamper to the door, and not seldom snap at unwary visitors. Whenever *Counselor Cautious* went to a house, &c., where he was not quite certain that there was no Dog, after he had rapped at the door, he retired three or four yards from it, and prepared against the

Enemy: when the door was opened, he desired, if there was any Dog, that it might be shut up till he was gone, and would not enter the House till it was.

"*Sword and Tuck Sticks*, as commonly made, are hardly so good a weapon as a stout Stick—the Blades are often inserted into the Handles in such a slight manner, that one smart blow will break them out;—if you wish for a *Sword-Cane*, you must have one made with a good Regulation Blade, which alone will cost more than is usually charged for the entire Stick.—I have seen a Cane made by Mr. PRICE, of the *Stick and Umbrella Warehouse*, 221, in the *Strand*, near Temple Bar, which was excellently put together.

"A powerful weapon, and a very smart and light-looking thing, is an *Iron Stick* of about four-tenths of an inch in diameter, with a Hook next the Hand, and terminating at the other end in a Spike about five inches in length, which is covered by a Ferrule, the whole painted the colour of a common walking-stick; it has a light natty appearance, while it is in fact a most formidable Instrument."

We cannot charge our memory with this instrument, yet had we seen one once, we hardly think we could have forgot it. But Colonel de Berenger in his *Helps and Hints* prefers the umbrella. Umbrellas are usually carried, we believe, in wet weather, and dogs run mad, if ever, in dry. So the safe plan is to carry one all the year through, like the Duke.

"I found it a valuable weapon, although by mere chance; for walking alone in the rain, a large mad dog, pursued by men, suddenly turned upon me, out of a street which I had just approached; by instinct more than by judgment, I gave point at him severely, opened as the umbrella was, which, screening me at the same time, was an article from which he did not expect thrusts; but which, although made at guess, for I could not see him, turned him over and over, and before he could recover himself, his pursuers had come up immediately to despatch him; the whole being the work of even few seconds; but for the umbrella the horrors of hydrophobia might have fallen to my lot."

There is another mode, which, with the omission or alteration of a word or two, looks feasible, supposing we had to deal not with a bull-dog, but a young lady of our own species. "If," says the Colonel, "you can seize a dog's front paw neatly, and immediately squeeze it sharply, he cannot bite you till you cease to squeeze it; therefore, by keeping him thus well pinched, you may lead him wherever you like; or you may, with the other hand, seize him by the skin of the neck, to hold him thus without danger, provided your strength is equal to his efforts at extrication." But here comes the Colonel's infallible *vade-mecum*.

"Look at them with your face from between your open legs, holding the skirts away, and running at them thus backwards, of course head below, stern exposed and above, and growling angrily, most dogs, seeing so strange an animal, the head at the heels, the eyes below the mouth, &c., are so dismayed, that, with their tails between their legs, they are glad to scamper away, some even howling with af

fright. I have never tried it with a thoroughbred bull-dog, nor do I advise it with them; though I have practised it, and successfully, with most of the other kinds; it might fail with these, still I cannot say it will."

Thus armed against the canine species, the Traveller, according to our Oracle, must also provide himself with a portable case of instruments for drawing—a sketch and note book—paper—ink—and PINS—NEEDLES—AND THREAD! A ruby or Rhodium pen, made by Doughty, No. 10, Great Ormond Street—pencils from Langdon's of Great Russell Street—a folding one-foot rule, divided into eighths, tenths, and twelfths of inches—a hunting watch with seconds, with a detached lever or Duplex's escapement, in good strong silver cases—Dollond's achromatic opera-glass—a night-lamp—a tinder-box—two pair of spectacles, with strong silver frames—an eye-glass in a silver ring slung round the neck—a traveller's knife, containing a large and small blade, a saw, hook for taking a stone out of a horse's shoe, turn-screw, gunpicker, tweezers, and long corkscrew—galoches or paraloses—your own knife and fork, and spoon—a Welsh wig—a spare hat—umbrella—two great-coats, one for cool and fair weather, (*i. e.* between 45° and and 55° of Fahrenheit,) and another for cold and foul weather, of broadcloth, lined with fur, and denominated a "dreadnought."

Such are a few of the articles with which every sensible traveller will provide himself before leaving *Dulce Domum* to brave the perils of a Tour through the Hop-districts.

"If circumstances compel you," continues the Doctor, "to ride on the outside of a coach, put on two shirts and two pair of stockings, turn up the collar of your great-coat, and tie a handkerchief round it, and have plenty of dry straw to set your feet on."

In our younger days we used to ride a pretty considerable deal on the outside of coaches, and much hardship did we endure before we hit on the discovery above promulgated. We once rode outside from Edinburgh to London, in winter without a great-coat, in nankeen trousers *sans* drawers, and all other articles of our dress thin and light in proportion. That we are alive at this day, is no less singular than true—no more true than singular. We have known ourselves so firmly frozen to the leather ceiling of the mail-coach, that it required the united strength of coachman, guard, and the other three outsiders, to separate us from the vehicle, to which we adhered as part and parcel. All at once the device of the double shirt flashed upon us—and it underwent signal improvements before we reduced the theory to practice. For, first, we endued ourselves with a leather shirt—then with a flannel one—and then, in regular succession, with three linen shirts. This concluded the Series of Shirts. Then commenced the waistcoats. A plain woollen waistcoat without buttons—with hooks and eyes—took the lead, and kept it; it was closely pressed by what is, in common parlance, called an under-waistcoat—the body being flannel, the breast-edges bearing a pretty pattern of stripes or bars—then came a natty red waistcoat, of which we were particularly

proud, and of which the effect on landlady, bar-maid, and chamber-maid, we remember was irresistible—and, fourthly and finally, to complete that department of our investiture, shone with soft yet sprightly lustre—the double-breasted bright-buttoned Buff. Five and four are nine—so that between our carcass and our coat, it might have been classically said of our dress—"Novies interfusa coeret." At this juncture of affairs began the coats, which, as it is a great mistake to wear too many coats—never exceeded six. The first used generally to be a pretty old coat that had lived to moralize over the mutability of human affairs—threadbare—napless—and what ignorant people might have called shabby-genteel. It was followed by a plain, sensible, honest, unpretending, common-place, every day sort of a coat—and not, perhaps, of the very best merino. Over it was drawn, with some little difficulty, what had, in its prime of life, attracted universal admiration in Prince's Street, as a blue surtout. Then came your regular olive-coloured great-coat—not braided and embroidered *à la militaire*—for we scorned to sham travelling-captain—but *simplex munditiis*, plain in its neatness; not wanting then was your shag-hued wraprascal, betokening that its wearer was up to snuff—and to close this strange eventful history, the seven-caped Dreadnought, that loved to dally with the sleet and snows—held in calm contempt Boreas; Notus, Auster, Eurus, and "the rest"—and drove baffled Winter howling behind the Pole.

The same principle of accumulation was made applicable to the neck. No stock. Neckcloth above neckcloth—beginning with singles—and then getting into the full uncut squares—the amount of the whole being somewhere about a dozen. The concluding neckcloth worn cravat-fashion, and flowing down the breast in a cascade, like that of an attorney-general. Round our cheek and ear, leaving the lips at liberty to breathe and imbibe, was wreathed, in undying remembrance of the bravest of the brave, a Jem Belcher fogle—and beneath the cravat-cascade a comforter netted by the fair hands of her who had kissed us at our departure, and was sighing for our return. One hat we always found sufficient—and that a black beaver—for a lily castor suits not the knowledge-box of a friend to "a limited constitutional and hereditary monarchy."

As to our lower extremities—One pair only of roomy shoes—one pair of stockings of the finest lamb's-wool—another of common close worsted, knit by the hand of a Lancashire witch—thirdly, Shetland hose. All three pair reaching well up towards the fork—each about an inch-and-a-half longer than its predecessor. Flannel drawers—one pair only—within the lamb's-wool, and touching the instep—then one pair of elderly cassimeres, of yore worn at balls—one pair of Manchester white cords—ditto of strong black quilt trousers, "capacious and serene"—and at or beneath the freezing point, overalls of the same stuff as "Johnny's gray breeks"—neat but not gaudy—mud-repelers—themselves a host—never in all their lives "thoroughly wet through"—frost-proof—and often mistaken by the shepherd on the

would, as the Telegraph hung for a moment on the misty upland, for the philibeg of Phœbus in his dawn-dress, hastily slept on as he bade farewell to some star-paramour, and, like a giant about to run a race, devoured the cerulean course of day, as if impatient to reach the goal set in the Western Sea.

FOURTH COURSE.

PRAY, reader, do you know what line of conduct you ought to pursue if you are to sleep on the road? "The earlier you arrive," says the Doctor, "and the earlier after your arrival you apply, the better the chance of getting a good bed—this done, order your luggage to your room. A travelling-bag, or a 'sac de nuit,' in addition to your trunk, is very necessary; it should be large enough to contain one or two changes of linen—a night-shirt—shaving apparatus—comb, clothes, tooth and hair brushes, &c. Take care, too, to see your sheets well aired, and that you can fasten your room at night. Carry fire-arms also, and take the first unostentatious opportunity of showing your pistols to the landlord. However well-made your pistols, however carefully you have chosen your flint, and however dry your powder, look to the priming and touch-hole every night. Let your pistols be double-barrelled, and with spring bayonets."

Now, really, it appears to us, that in lieu of double-barrelled pistols with spring bayonets, it would be advisable to substitute a brace of black-puddings for daylight, and a brace of Oxford or Bologna sausages for the dark hours. They will be equally formidable to the robber, and far safer to yourself. Indeed we should like to see duelling black-puddings or sausages, introduced at Chalk-Farm;—and, that etiquette might not be violated, each party might take his antagonist's weapon, and the seconds, as usual, see them loaded. Surgeons will have to attend as usual. Far more blood, indeed, would be thus spilt, than according to the present fashion.

The Doctor, as might be expected, makes a mighty rout—a prodigious fuss—all through the Oracle, about damp sheets;—he must immediately see the chamber-maid, and overlook the airing with his own hands and eyes. He is also an advocate of the warming-pan—and for the adoption, indeed, of every imaginable scheme for excluding death from his chamber. He goes on the basis of every thing being as it should not be in inns—and often reminds us of our old friend Death-in-the-Pot. Nay, as Travellers never can be sure that those who have slept in the beds before them were not afflicted with some contagious disease, whenever they can they should carry their own sheets with them—namely, a "light eider-down quilt, and two dressed hart skins, to be put on the mattresses, to hinder the disagreeable contact. These are to be covered with the traveller's own sheets—and if an eider-down quilt be not sufficient to keep him warm, his coat put upon it will increase the heat sufficiently. If the traveller is not provided with these

accommodations, it will sometimes be prudent not to undress entirely; however, the neck-cloth, gaiters, shirt, and every thing which checks the circulation, must be loosened."

Clean sheets, the Doctor thinks, are rare in inns; and he believes that it is the practice to "take them from the bed, sprinkle them with water, fold them down, and put them into a press. When they are wanted again, they are, literally speaking, shown to the fire, and, in a reeking state, laid on the bed. The traveller is tired and sleepy, dreams of that pleasure or business which brought him from home, and the remotest thing from his mind is, that from the very repose which he fancies has refreshed him, he has received the rheumatism. The receipt, therefore, to sleep comfortably at inns, is to take your own sheets, to have plenty of flannel gowns, and to promise, and take care to pay, a handsome consideration for the liberty of choosing your bed."

Now, Doctor, suppose all travellers behaved at inns upon such principles, what a perpetual commotion there would be in the house! The kitchens, back-kitchens, laundries, drying-rooms, would at all times be crammed choke-full of a miscellaneous rabble of Editors, Authors, Lords, Baronets, Squires, Doctors of Divinity, Fellows of Colleges, Half-pay Officers, and Bagmen, oppressing the chamber-maids to death, and in the headlong gratification of their passion for well-aired sheets, setting fire so incessantly to public premises as to raise the rate of insurance to a ruinous height, and thus bring bankruptcy on all the principal establishments in Great Britain. But shutting our eyes, for a moment, to such general conflagration and bankruptcy, and indulging ourselves in the violent supposition that some inns might still continue to exist, think, O think, worthy Doctor, to what other fatal results this system, if universally acted upon, would, in a very few years of the transitory life of man, inevitably lead! In the first place, in a country where all travellers carried with them their own sheets, none would be kept in inns except for the use of the establishment's own members. This would be inflicting a vital blow, indeed, on the inns of a country. For mark, in the second place, that the blankets would not be long of following the sheets. The blankets would soon fly after the sheets on the wings of love and despair. Thirdly, are you so ignorant, Doctor, of this world and its ways, as not to see that the bedsteads would, in the twinkling of an eye, follow the blankets! What a wild, desolate, wintry appearance would a bed-room then exhibit!

The foresight of such consequences as these may well make a man shudder. We have no objections, however, to suffer the Doctor himself, and a few other occasional damp-dreading old quizzes, "to see the bed-clothes put to the fire in their presence," merely at the expense of subjugating themselves to the derision of all the chambermaids, cooks, scullions, boots, ostlers, and painters. (The painter is the artist who is employed in inns to paint the buttered toast. He always works in oils. As the Director General would say—he deals in bu-

tety touches.) Their feverish and restless anxiety about sheets, and their agitated discourse on damps and deaths, hold them up to vulgar eyes in the light of lunatics. They become the groundwork of practical jokes—perhaps are bitten to death by fleas; for a chambermaid, of a disposition naturally witty and cruel, has a dangerous power put into her hands, in the charge of blankets. The Doctor's whole soul and body are wrapt up in well-aired sheets; but the insidious Abigail, tormented by his flustering, becomes in turn the tormentor—and selecting the yellowest, dingiest, and dirtiest pair of blankets to be found throughout the whole gallery of garrets, (those for years past used by long-bearded old-clothesmen Jews,) with a wicked leer that would lull all suspicion asleep in a man of a far less inflammable temperament, she literally envelopes him in vermin, and after a night of one of the plagues of Egypt, the Doctor rises in the morning, from top to bottom absolutely tattooed!

The Doctor, of course, is one of those travellers who believe, that unless they use the most ingenious precautions, they will be uniformly robbed and murdered in inns. The villains steal upon you during the midnight hour, when all the world is asleep. They leave their shoes down stairs, and leopard-like, ascend with velvet, or—what is almost as noiseless—worsted steps, the wooden stairs. True, that your breeches are beneath your bolster—but that trick of travellers has long been “as notorious as the sun at noonday;” and although you are aware of your breeches, with all the ready money perhaps that you are worth in this world, eloping from beneath your parental eye, you in vain try to cry out—for a long, broad, iron hand, with ever so many iron fingers, is on your mouth; another, with still more numerous digits, compresses your windpipe, while a low hoarse voice, in a whisper to which Sarah Siddons's was empty air, on pain of instant death enforces silence from a man unable for his life to utter a single word; and after pulling off all the bed-clothes, and then clothing you with curses, the ruffians, whose accent betrays them to be Irishmen, inflict upon you divers wanton wounds with a blunt instrument, probably a crow-bar—swearing by Satan and all his saints, that if you stir an inch of your body before daybreak, they will instantly return, cut your throat, knock out your brains, sack you, and carry you off for sale to a surgeon. Therefore you must use pocket door-bolts, which are applicable to almost all sorts of doors, and on many occasions save the property and life of the traveller. The corkscrew door-fastening the Doctor recommends as the simplest. This is screwed in between the door and the door-post, and unites them so firmly, that great power is required to force a door so fastened. They are as portable as common corkscrews, and their weight does not exceed an ounce and a half. The safety of your bed-room should always be carefully examined; and in case of bolts not being at hand, it will be useful to hinder entrance into the room by putting a table and a chair upon it against the door. Take a peep below the bed, and into the closets, and every place

where concealment is possible—of course, although the Doctor forgets to suggest it, into the chimney. A friend of the Doctor's used to place a bureau against the door, and “thereon he set a basin and ewer in such a position as easily to rattle, so that, on being shook, they instantly became *molto agitato*.” Upon one alarming occasion this device frightened away one of the chambermaids, or some other Paulina Pry, who attempted to steal on the virgin sleep of the travelling Joseph, who all the time was hiding his head beneath the bolster. Joseph, however, believed it was a horrible midnight assassin, with mustaches and a dagger. “The chattering of the crockery gave the alarm, and the attempt, after many attempts, was abandoned.”

With all these fearful apprehensions in his mind, Dr. Kitchiner must have been a man of great natural personal courage and intrepidity, to have slept even once in his whole lifetime from home. What dangers must we have passed, who used to plump in, without a thought of damp in the bed, or scamp below it—closet and chimney uninspected, door unbolted and unscrewed, exposed to rape, robbery, and murder! It is mortifying to think that we should be alive at this day. Nobody, male or female, thought it worth their while to rob, ravish, or murder us! There we lay, forgotten by the whole world—till the crowing of cocks, or the ringing of bells, or blundering Boots insisting on it that we were a Manchester Bagman, who had taken an inside in the Heavy at five, broke our repose, and Sol laughing in at the unshuttered and uncurtained window showed us the floor of our dormitory, not streaming with a gore of blood. We really know not whether to be most proud of having been the favourite child of Fortune, or the neglected brat of Fate. One only precaution did we ever use to take against assassination, and all the other ills that flesh is heir to, sleep where one may, and that was to say inwardly a short fervent prayer, humbly thanking our Maker for all the happiness—let us trust it was innocent—of the day; and humbly imploring his blessing on all the hopes of to-morrow. For, at the time we speak of we were young—and every morning, whatever the atmosphere might be, rose bright and beautiful with hopes that, far as the eyes of the soul could reach, glittered on earth's, and heaven's, and life's horizon!

But suppose that after all this trouble to get himself bolted and screwed into a paradisaical tabernacle of a dormitory, there had suddenly rung through the house the cry of FIRE—FIRE—FIRE! how was Dr. Kitchiner to get out? Tables, bureaux, benches, chairs, blocked up the only door—all laden with wash-hand basins and other utensils, the whole crockery shepherdesses of the chimney-piece, double-barrelled pistols with spring bayonets ready to shoot and stab, without distinction of persons, as their proprietor was madly seeking to escape the roaring flames! Both windows are iron-bound, with all their shutters, and over and above tightly fastened with “the corkscrew-fastening, the simplest that we have seen.” The wind-board is in like manner, and by the same unhappy contrivance, firmly jammed into the

jaws of the chimney, so egress to the Doctor up the vent is wholly denied—no fire-engine in the town—but one under repair. There has not been a drop of rain for a month, and the river is not only distant but dry. The element is growling along the galleries like a lion, and the room is filling with something more deadly than back-smoke. A shrill voice is heard crying—"Number 5 will be burned alive! Number 5 will be burned alive! Is there no possibility of saving the life of Number 5!" The Doctor falls down before the barricado, and is stretched all his hapless length fainting on the floor. At last the door is burst open, and landlord, landlady, chambermaid, and boots—each in a different key—from manly bass to childish treble, demand of Number 5 if he be a murderer or a madman—for, gentle reader, it has been a—Dream.

We must hurry to a close, and shall perform the short remainder of our journey on foot. The first volume of the Oracle concludes with "Observations on Pedestrians." Here we are at home—and could, we imagine, have given the Doctor a mile in the hour in a year-march. The strength of man, we are given distinctly to understand by the Doctor, is "in the ratio of the performance of the restorative process, which is as the quantity and quality of what he puts into his stomach, the energy of that organ, and the quantity of exercise he takes." This statement of the strength of man may be unexceptionably true, and most philosophical to those who are up to it—but to us it resembles a definition we have heard of thunder, "the conjection of the sulphur congeals the matter." It appears to us that a strong stomach is not the sole constituent of a strong man—but that it is not much amiss to be provided with a strong back, a strong breast, strong thighs, strong legs, and strong feet. With a strong stomach alone—yea, even the stomach of a horse—a man will make but a sorry Pedestrian. The Doctor, however, speedily redeems himself by saying admirably well, "that nutrition does not depend more on the state of the stomach, or of what we put into it, than it does on the stimulus given to the system by exercise, which alone can produce that perfect circulation of the blood which is required to throw off superfluous secretions, and give the absorbents an appetite to suck up fresh materials. This requires the action of every petty artery, and of the minutest ramifications of every nerve and fibre in our body." Thus, he remarks, a little further on, by way of illustration, "that a man suffering under a fit of the vapours, after half an hour's brisk ambulation, will often find that he has walked it off, and that the action of the body has exonerated the mind."

The Doctor warms as he walks—and is very near leaping over the fence of Political Economy. "Providence, he remarks, furnishes materials, but expects that we should work them up for ourselves. The earth must be laboured before it gives its increase, and when it is forced to produce its several products, how many hands must they pass through before they are fit for use! Manufactures, trade, and agriculture, naturally employ more than nineteen persons out of twenty; and as for

those who are, by the condition in which they are born, exempted from work, they are more miserable than the rest of mankind, unless they daily and duly employ themselves in that VOLUNTARY LABOUR WHICH GOES BY THE NAME OF EXERCISE." Inflexible justice, however, forces us to say, that although the Doctor throws a fine philosophical light over the most general principles of walking, as they are involved in "that voluntary labour which goes by the name of exercise," yet he falls into frequent and fatal error when he descends into the particulars of the practice of pedestrianism. Thus, he says that no person should sit down to a hearty meal immediately after any great exertion, either of mind or body—that is, one might say, after a few miles of Plinlimmon, or a few pages of the Principia. Let the man, quoth he, "who comes home fatigued by bodily exertion, especially if he feel heated by it, throw his legs upon a chair, and remain quite tranquil and composed, that the energy which has been dispersed to the extremities may have time to return to the stomach, when it is required." To all this we say—Fudge! The sooner you get hold of a leg of roasted mutton the better; but meanwhile, off rapidly with a pot of porter—then leisurely on with a clean shirt—wash your face and hands in gelid—none of your tepid water. There is no harm done if you should shave—then keep walking up and down the parlour rather impatiently, for such conduct is natural, and in all things act agreeably to nature—stir up the waiter with some original jest by way of stimulant, and to give the knave's face a well-pleased stare—and never doubting "that the energy which has been dispersed to the extremities" has had ample time to return to the stomach, in God's name fall to! and take care that the second course shall not appear till there is no vestige left of the first—a second course being looked on by the judicious moralist and pedestrian very much in the light in which the poet has made a celebrated character consider it—

"Nor fame I slight—nor for her favours call—
She comes unlook'd for—if she comes at all."

To prove how astonishingly our strength may be diminished by indolence, the Doctor tells us, that meeting a gentleman who had lately returned from India, to his inquiry after his health he replied, "Why, better—better, thank ye—I think I begin to feel some symptoms of the return of a little English energy. Do you know that the day before yesterday I was in such high spirits, and felt so strong, I actually put on one of my stockings myself!"

The Doctor then asserts, that it "has been repeatedly proved that a man can travel further for a week or a month than a horse." On reading this sentence to Will Whipcord—"Yes, sir," replied that renowned Professor of the Newmarket Philosophy, "that's all right, sir—a man can beat a horse!"

Now, Will Whipcord may be right in his opinion, and a man may beat a horse. But it never has been tried: There is no match of pedestrianism on record between a first-rate man and a first-rate horse; and as soon as there is, we shall lay our money on the horse—only mind, the horse carries no weight, and

he must be allowed to do his work on turf. We know that Arab horses will carry their rider, provision and provender, arms and accoutrements, (no light weight,) across the desert, eighty miles a-day, for many days—and that for four days they have gone a hundred miles a-day. That would have puzzled Captain Barclay in his prime, the Prince of Pedestrians. However, be that as it may, the comparative pedestrian powers of man and horse have never yet been ascertained by any accredited match in England.

The Doctor then quotes an extract from a Pedestrian Tour in Wales by a Mr. Shepherd, who, we are afraid, is no great headpiece, though we shall be happy to find ourselves in error. Mr. Shepherd, speaking of the inconveniences and difficulties attending a pedestrian excursion, says, "that at one time the roads are rendered so muddy by the rain, that it is almost impossible to proceed;"—"at other times you are exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and by wasting time under a tree or a hedge are benighted in your journey, and again reduced to an uncomfortable dilemma." "Another disadvantage is, that your track is necessarily more confined—a deviation of ten or twelve miles makes an important difference, which, if you were on horseback, would be considered as trivial." "Under all these circumstances," he says, "it may appear rather remarkable that we should have chosen a pedestrian excursion—in answer to which, it may be observed, that we were not apprized of these things till we had experienced them." What! Mr. Shepherd, were you, who we presume have reached the age of puberty, not apprized, before you penetrated as a pedestrian into the Principality, that "roads are rendered muddy by the rain?" Had you never met, either in your experience of life, or in the course of your reading, proof positive that pedestrians "are exposed to the inclemency of the weather?" That, if a man will linger too long under a tree or a hedge when the sun is going down, "he will be benighted?" Under what serene atmosphere, in what happy clime, have you pursued your preparatory studies *sub dio*? But, our dear Mr. Shepherd, why waste time under the shelter of a tree or a hedge? Waste time nowhere, our young and unknown friend. What the worse would you have been of being soaked to the skin? Besides, consider the danger you ran of being killed by lightning, had there been a few flashes, under a tree? Further, what will become of you, if you addict yourself on every small emergency to trees and hedges, when the country you walk through happens to be as bare as the palm of your hand? But—your jacket, good sir—scorn an umbrella—emerge boldly from the silvan shade, snap your fingers at the pitiful pelting of the pitiless storm—poor spite indeed in Densissimus Imber—and we will insure your life for a presentation copy of your Tour against all the diseases that leapt out of Pandora's box, not only till you have reached the Inn at Capel-Cerig, but your own home in England, (we forget the county,)—ay, till your marriage, and the baptism of your first-born.

Dr. Kitchiner seems to have been much

frightened by Mr. Shepherd's picture of a storm in a puddle, and proposes a plan of alleviation of one great inconvenience of pedestrianizing. "Persons," quoth he, "who take a pedestrian excursion, and intend to subject themselves to the uncertainties of accommodation, by going across the country and visiting unfrequented paths, will act wisely to carry with them a *piece of oil-skin* to sit upon while taking refreshments out of doors, which they will often find needful during such excursions." To save trouble, the breech of the pedestrian's breeches should be a patch of oil-skin. Here a question of great difficulty and importance arises—Breeches or trousers? Dr. Kitchiner is decidedly for breeches. "The garter," says he, "should be below the knee, and breeches are much better than trowsers." The general adoption of those which, till our late wars, were exclusively used by 'the Lords of the Ocean,' has often excited my astonishment. However convenient trousers may be to the sailor who has to cling to slippery shrouds, for the landsman nothing can be more inconvenient. They are heating in summer, and in winter they are collectors of mud. Moreover, they occasion a necessity for wearing garters. Breeches are, in all respects, much more convenient. These should have the knee-band three quarters of an inch wide, lined on the upper side with a piece of plush, and fastened with a buckle, which is much easier than even double strings, and, by observing the strap, you always know the exact degree of tightness that is required to keep up the stocking; any pressure beyond that is prejudicial, especially to those who walk long distances."

We are strongly inclined to agree with the Doctor in his panegyric on breeches. True, that in the forenoons, especially if of a dark colour, such as black, and worn with white, or even gray or bluish, stockings, they are apt, in the present state of public taste, to stamp you a schoolmaster, or a small grocer in full dress, or an exciseman going to a ball. We could dispense too with the knee-buckles and plush lining—though we allow the one might be ornamental, and the other useful. But what think you, gentle reader, of walking with a Pedometer? A Pedometer is an instrument cunningly devised to tell you how far and how fast you walk, and is, quoth the Doctor, a "perambulator in miniature." The box containing the wheels is made of the size of a watch-case, and goes into the breeches-pocket, and by means of a string and hook, fastened at the waistband or at the knee, the number of steps a man takes, in his regular paces, are registered from the action of the string upon the internal wheelwork at every step, to the amount of 30,000. It is necessary to ascertain the distance walked, that the average length of one pace be precisely known, and that multiplied by the number of steps registered on the dial-plate.

All this is very ingenious; and we know one tolerable pedestrian who is also a Pedometrist. But no Pedometrist will ever make a fortune in a mountainous island, like Great Britain, where pedestrianism is indigenous to the soil. A good walker is as regular in his

going as clock-work. He has his different paces—three, three and a half—four, four and a half—five, five and a half—six miles an hour—toe and heel. A common watch, therefore, is to him, in the absence of milestones, as good as a Pedometer—with this great and indisputable advantage, that a common watch continues to go even after you have yourself stopped, whereas, the moment you sit down on your oil-skin patch, why, your Pedometer (which indeed, from its name and construction, is not unreasonable) immediately stands still. Neither, we believe, can you accurately note the pulse of a friend in a fever by a Pedometer.

What pleasure on this earth transcends a breakfast after a twelve-mile walk? Or is there in this sublunary scene a delight superior to the gradual, dying-away, dreamy drowsiness that, at the close of a long summer day's journey up hill and down dale, seals up the

glimmering eyes with honey-dew, and stretches out, under the loving hands of nourrice Nature, the whole elongated animal economy, steeped in rest divine from the organ of veneration to the point of the great toe, be it on a bed of down, chaff, straw, or heather, in palace, hall, hotel, or hut? If in an inn, nobody interferes with you in meddling officiousness; neither landlord, bagman, waiter, chambermaid, boots;—you are left to yourself without being neglected. Your bell may not be emulously answered by all the menials on the establishment, but a smug or shock-headed drawer appears in good time; and if mine host may not always dignify your dinner by the deposition of the first dish, yet, influenced by the rumour that soon spreads through the premises, he bows farewell at your departure, with a shrewd suspicion that you are a nobleman in disguise.

SOLILOQUY ON THE SEASONS.

FIRST RHAPSODY.

No weather more pleasant than that of a mild WINTER day. So gracious the season, that Hyems is like Ver—Januarius like Christopher North. Art thou the Sun of whom Milton said,

“Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams,”

an image of disconsolate obscurity? Bright art thou as at meridian on a June Sabbath; but effusing a more temperate lustre, not unfelt by the sleeping, though not insensate earth. She stirs in her sleep, and murmurs—the mighty mother; and quiet as herself, though broad awake, her old ally the ship-bearing sea. What though the woods be leafless—they look as alive as when laden with umbrage; and who can tell what is going on now within the heart of that calm oak grove? The fields laugh not now—but here and there they smile. If we see no flowers we think of them—and less of the perished than of the unborn; for regret is vain, and hope is blest; in peace there is the promise of joy—and therefore in the silent pastures a perfect beauty how restorative to man's troubled heart!

The Shortest Day in all the year—yet is it lovelier than the Longest. Can that be the voice of birds? With the laverock's lyric our fancy filled the sky—with the throstle's roundelay it awoke the wood. In the air life is audible—circling unseen. Such serenity must be inhabited by happiness. Ha! there thou art, our Familiar—the selfsame Robin Redbreast that pecked at our nursery window, and used to warble from the gable of the school-house his sweet winter song!

In company we are silent—in solitude we soliloquize. So dearly do we love our own voice that we cannot bear to hear it mixed with that of others—perhaps drowned; and then our bashfulness tongue-ties us in the hush

expectant of our “golden opinions,” when all eyes are turned to the speechless “old man eloquent,” and you might hear a tangle dishevelled itself in Neæra's hair. But all alone by ourselves, in the country, among trees, standing still among untrodden leaves—as now—how we do speak! All thoughts—all feelings—desire utterance; left to themselves they are not happy till they have evolved into words—winged words that sometimes settle on the ground, like moths on flowers—sometimes seek the sky, like eagles above the clouds.

No such soliloquies in written poetry as these of ours—the act of composition is fatal as frost to their flow; yet composition there is at such solitary times going on among the moods of the mind, as among the clouds on a still but not airless sky, perpetual but imperceptible transformations of the beautiful, obedient to the bidding of the spirit of beauty.

Who but Him who made it knoweth aught of the Laws of Spirit? All of us may know much of what is “wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best,” in obedience to them; but leaving the open day, we enter at once into thickest night. Why at this moment do we see a spot once only visited by us—unremembered for ever so many flights of black or bright winged years—see it in fancy as it then was in nature, with the same dew-drops on that wondrous myrtle beheld but on that morning—such a myrtle as no other eyes beheld ever on this earth but ours, and the eyes of one now in heaven?

Another year is about to die—and how wags the world? “What great events are on the gale?” Go ask our statesmen. But their rule—their guidance is but over the outer world, and almost powerless their folly or their wisdom over the inner region in which we mortals live, and move, and have our being, where the fall of a throne makes no more noise than that of a leaf!

Thank Heaven! Summer and Autumn are both dead and buried at last, and white lies the snow on their graves! Youth is the season of all sorts of insolence, and therefore we can forgive and forget almost any thing in Spring. He has always been a privileged personage; and we have no doubt that he played his pranks even in Paradise. To-day, he meets you unexpectedly on the hill-side; and was there ever a face in this world so celestialized by smiles! All the features are framed of light. Gaze into his eyes, and you feel that in the untroubled lustre there is something more sublime than in the heights of the cloudless heavens, or in the depths of the waveless seas. More sublime, because essentially spiritual. There stands the young Angel, entranced in the conscious mystery of his own beautiful and blessed being; and the earth becomes all at once fit region for the sojourn of the Son of the Morning. So might some great painter image the First-born of the Year, till nations adored the picture.—To-morrow you repair, with hermit steps, to the Mount of the Vision, and,

"Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,"

Spring clutches you by the hair with the fingers of frost; blashes a storm of sleet in your face, and finishes, perhaps, by folding you in a winding-sheet of snow, in which you would infallibly perish but for a pocket-pistol of Glenlivet.—The day after to-morrow, you behold him—Spring—walking along the firmament, sad, but not sullen—mournful, but not miserable—disturbed, but not despairing—now coming out towards you in a burst of light—and now fading away from you in a gathering of gloom—even as one might figure in his imagination a fallen Angel. On Thursday, confound you if you know what the deuce to make of his Springship. There he is, stripped to the buff—playing at hide-and-seek, hare-and-hound, with a queer crazy crony of his in a fur cap, swandown waistcoat, and hairy breeches, Lod-brog or Winter. You turn up the whites of your eyes, and the browns of your hands in amazement, till the Two, by way of change of pastime, cease their mutual vagaries, and like a couple of hawks diverting themselves with an owl, in conclusion buffet you off the premises. You insert the occurrence; with suitable reflections, in your Meteorological Diary, under the head—Spring. On Friday, nothing is seen of you but the blue tip of your nose, for you are confined to bed by rheumatism, and nobody admitted to your sleepless sanctum but your condoling Mawsey. 'Tis a pity. For never since the flood-greened earth on her first resurrection morn laughed around Ararat, spanned was she by such a Rainbow! By all that is various and vanishing, the arch seems many miles broad, and many miles high, and all creation to be gladly and gloriously gathered together without being crowded—plains, woods, villages, towns, hills, and clouds, beneath the pathway of Spring, once more an Angel—an unfallen Angel! While the tinge that trembles into transcendent hues fading and fluctuating—deepening and dying—now gone, as if for ever—and now back again in an instant, as if breathing and alive—is felt,

during all that wavering visitation, to be of all sights the most evanescent, and yet inspirative of a beauty-born belief, bright as the sun that flung the image on the cloud—profound as the gloom it illumines—that it shone and is shining there at the bidding of Him who inhabiteth eternity.—The grim noon of Saturday, after a moaning morning, and one silent intermediate hour of grave-like stillness, begins to gleam fitfully with lightning like a maniac's eye; and is not that

"The sound
Of thunder heard remote?"

On earth wind there is none—not so much as a breath. But there is a strong wind in heaven—for see how that huge cloud-city, a night within a day, comes moving on along the hidden mountain-tops, and hangs over the loch all at once black as pitch, except that here and there a sort of sullen purple heaves upon the long slow swell, and here and there along the shores—how caused we know not—are seen, but heard not, the white melancholy breakers! Is no one smitten blind? No! Thank God! But ere the thanksgiving has been worded, an airquake has split asunder the cloud-city, the night within the day, and all its towers and temples are disordered along the firmament, to a sound that might waken the dead. Where are ye, ye echo-hunters, that grudge not to purchase gunpowder explosions on Lowood bowling-green at four shillings the blast? See! there are our artillerymen stalking from battery to battery—all hung up aloft facing the west—or "each standing by his gun" with lighted match, moving or motionless, Shadow-figures, and all clothed in black-blue uniform, with blood-red facings portentously glancing in the sun, as he strives to struggle into heaven. The Generalissimo of all the forces, who is he but—Spring?—Hand in hand with Spring, Sabbath descends from heaven unto earth; and are not their feet beautiful on the mountains? Small as is the voice of that tinkling bell from that humble spire, overtopped by its coeval trees, yet is it heard in the heart of infinitude. So is the bleating of these silly sheep on the braes—and so is that voice of psalms, all at once rising so spirit-like, as if the very kirk were animated, and singing a joyous song in the wilderness to the ear of the Most High. For all things are under his care—those that, as we dream, have no life—the flowers, and the herbs, and the trees—those that some dim scripture seems to say, when they die, utterly perish—and those that all bright scripture, whether written in the book of God, or the book of Nature, declares will live for ever!

If such be the character and conduct of Spring during one week, wilt thou not forget and forgive—with us—much occasional conduct on his part that appears not only inexplicable, but incomprehensible? But we cannot extend the same indulgence to Summer and to Autumn. SUMMER is a season come to the years of discretion, and ought to conduct himself like a staid, sober, sensible, middle-aged man, not past, but passing, his prime. Now, Summer, we are sorry to say it, often behaves in a way to make his best friends

ashamed of him—in a way absolutely disgraceful to a person of his time of life. Having picked a quarrel with the Sun—his benefactor, nay, his father—what else could he expect but that that enlightened Christian would altogether withhold his countenance from so undutiful and ungrateful a child, and leave him to travel along the mire and beneath the clouds! For some weeks Summer was sulky—and sullenly scorned to shed a tear. His eyes were like ice. By and by, like a great school-boy, he began to whine and whimper—and when he found that would not do, he blubbered like the booby of the lowest form. Still the Sun would not look on him—or if he did, 'twas with a sudden and short half-scowl that froze the ingrate's blood. At last the Summer grew contrite, and the Sun forgiving; the one burst out into a flood of tears, the other into a flood of light. In simple words, the Summer wept and the Sun smiled—and for one broken month there was a perpetual alternation of rain and radiance! How beautiful is penitence! How beautiful forgiveness! For one week the Summer was restored to his pristine peace and old luxuriance, and the desert blossomed like the rose.

Therefore ask we the Summer's pardon for thanking Heaven that he was dead. Would that he were alive again, and buried not for ever beneath the yellow forest leaves! O thou first, faint, fair, finest tinge of dawning Light that streaks the still-sleeping yet just-waking face of the morn, Light and no-Light, a shadowy Something, that as we gaze is felt to be growing into an emotion that must be either Innocence or Beauty, or both blending together into devotion before Deity, once more duly visible in the divine colouring that forebodes another day to mortal life—before Thee what holy bliss to kneel upon the greensward in some forest glade, while every leaf is a-tremble with dewdrops, and the happy little birds are beginning to twitter, yet motionless among the boughs—before Thee to kneel as at a shrine, and breathe deeper and deeper—as the lustre waxeth purer and purer, brighter and more bright, till range after range arise of crimson clouds in altitude sublime, and breast above breast expands of yellow woods softly glittering in their far-spread magnificence—then what holy bliss to breathe deeper and deeper unto Him who holds in the hollow of his hand the heavens and the earth, our high but most humble orisons! But now it is Day, and broad awake seems the whole joyful world. The clouds—lustrous no more—are all anchored on the sky, white as fleets waiting for the wind. Time is not felt—and one might dream that the Day was to endure for ever. Yet the great river rolls on in the light—and why will he leave those lovely inland woods for the naked shores? Why—responds some voice—hurry we on our lives—impetuous and passionate far more than he with all his cataclysms—as if anxious to forsake the regions of the upper day for the dim place from which we yet recoil in fear—the dim place which imagination sometimes seems to see even through the sunshine, beyond the bourne of this our unintelligible being, stretching sea-

like into a still more mysterious night! Long as a Midsummer Day is, it has gone by like a Heron's flight. The sun is setting!—and let him set without being scribbled upon by Christopher North. We took a pen-and-ink sketch of him in a "Day on Windermere." Poor nature is much to be pitied among painters and poets. They are perpetually falling into

"Such perusal of her face
As they would draw it."

And often must she be sick of the Curious Impertinents. But a Curious Impertinent are not we—if ever there was one beneath the skies, a devout worshipper of Nature; and though we often seem to heed not her shrine—it stands in our imagination, like a temple in a perpetual Sabbath.

It was poetically and piously said by the Ettrick Shepherd, at a Noctes, that there is no such thing in nature as bad weather. Take Summer, which early in our soliloquy we abused in good set terms. Its weather was broken, but not bad; and much various beauty and sublimity is involved in the epithet "broken," when applied to the "season of the year." Common-place people, especially town-dwellers, who *flit* into the country for a few months, have a silly and absurd idea of Summer, which all the atmospherical phenomena fail to drive out of their foolish fancies. They insist on its remaining with us for half a year at least, and on its being dressed in its Sunday's best every day in the week as long as they continue in country quarters. The Sun must rise, like a labourer, at the very earliest hour, shine all day, and go to bed late, else they treat him contumeliously, and declare that he is not worth his meat. Should he retire occasionally behind a cloud, which it seems most natural and reasonable for one to do who lives so much in the public eye, why a whole watering-place, uplifting a face of dissatisfied expostulation to heaven, exclaims, "Where is the Sun? Are we never to have any Sun?" They also insist that there shall be no rain of more than an hour's duration in the daytime, but that it shall all fall by night. Yet when the Sun does exert himself, as if at their bidding, and is shining, as he supposes, to their heart's content, up go a hundred green parasols in his face, enough to startle the celestial steeds in his chariot. A *broken* summer for us. Now and then a few continuous days—perhaps a whole week—but, if that be denied, now and then,

"Like angel visits, few and far between,"

one single Day—blue-spread over heaven, green-spread over earth—no cloud above, no shade below, save that dove-coloured marble lying motionless like the mansions of peace, and that pensive gloom that falls from some old castle or venerable wood—the stillness of a sleeping joy, to our heart profounder than that of death, in the air, in the sky, and resting on our mighty mother's undisturbed breast—no lowing on the hills, no bleating on the braes—the rivers almost silent as lochs, and the lochs, just visible in their aerial purity, floating dream-like between earth and sky, imbued with the beauty of both, and seeming to belong

to either, as the heart melts to human tenderness, or beyond all mortal loves the imagination soars! Such days seem now to us—as memory and imagination half restore and half create the past into such weather as may have shone over the bridal morn of our first parents in Paradise—to have been frequent—nay, to have lasted all the Summer long—when our boyhood was bright from the hands of God. Each of those days was in itself a life! Yet all those sunny lives melted into one Summer—and all those Summers formed one continuous bliss. Storms and snows vanished out of our ideal year; and then morning, noon, and night, wherever we breathed, we *felt*, what now we but *know*, the inmost meaning of that profound verse of Virgil the Divine—

“Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas.
Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
Purpureo: solempne suum, sua sidera norunt.”

Few—no such days as those seem now ever to be born. Sometimes we indeed gaze through the face into the heart of the sky, and for a moment feel that the ancient glory of the heavens has returned on our dream of life. But to the perfect beatitude of the skies there comes from the soul within us a mournful response, that betokens some wide and deep—some everlasting change. Joy is not now what joy was of yore; like a fine diamond with a flaw is now Imagination's eye; other motes than those that float through ether cross between its orb and the sun; the “fine gold has become dim,” with which morning and evening of old embossed the skies; the dewdrops are not now the pearls once they were, left on

“Flowers, and weeds as beautiful as flowers,”

by angels' and by fairies' wings; knowledge, custom, experience, fate, fortune, error, vice, and sin, have dulled, and darkened, and deadened all things; and the soul, unable to bring over the Present the ineffable bliss and beauty of the Past, almost swoons to think what a ghastly thunder-gloom may by Providence be reserved for the Future!

Nay—nay—things are not altogether so bad with us as this strain—sincere though it be as a stream from the sacred mountains—might seem to declare. We can yet enjoy a *broken* Summer. It would do your heart good to see us hobbling with our crutch along the Highland hills, sans great-coat or umbrella, in a summer-shower, aiblins cap in hand that our hair may grow, up to the knees in the bonny blooming heather, or clambering, like an old goat, among the cliffs. Nothing so good for gout or rheumatism as to get wet through, while the thermometer keeps ranging between 60° and 70°, three times a-day. What refreshment in the very sound—Soaking! Old bones wax dry—nerves numb—sinews stiff—flesh frail—and there is a sad drawback on the Whole Duty of Man. But a sweet, soft, sou'-wester blows “caller” on our craziness, and all our pores instinctively open their mouths at the approach of rain. Look but at those dozen downward showers, all denizens of heaven, how black, and blue, and bright they in their glee are streaming, and gleaming

athwart the sunny mountain gloom, while ever as they descend on earth, lift up the streams along the wilderness louder and louder a choral song. Look now at the heather—and smile whenever henceforth you hear people talk of *purple*. You have been wont to call a gold guinea or a sovereign *yellow*—but if you have got one in your pocket, place it on your palm, and in the light of that broom is it not a *dirty brown*? You have an emerald ring on your finger—but how gray it looks beside the *green* of those brackens, that pasture, that wood! Purple, yellow, and green, you have now seen, sir, for the first time in your life. Widening and widening over your head, all the while you have been gazing on the heather, the broom, the bracken, the pastures, and the woods, have the eternal heavens been preparing for you a vision of the sacred *Blue*. Is not that an Indigo Divine? Or, if you scorn that mercantile and manufacturing image, steal that blue from the sky, and let the lady of your love tinge but her eyelids with one touch, and a saintlier beauty will be in her upward looks as she beseeches Heaven to bless thee in her prayers! Set slowly—slowly—slowly—O Sun of Suns! as may be allowed by the laws of Nature. For not long after Thou hast sunk behind those mountains into the sea, will that celestial *nosx-nen* be tabernacled in the heavens!

Meanwhile, three of the dozen showers have so soaked and steeped our old crazy carcass in refreshment, and restoration, and renewal of youth, that we should not be surprised were we to outlive that raven croaking in pure *gaieté du cœur* on the cliff. Threescore and ten years! Poo—'tis a pitiful span! At a hundred we shall cut capers—for twenty years more keep to the Highland fling—and at the close of other twenty, jig it into the grave to that matchless strathspey, the Reel of Tullochgorum!

Having thus made our peace with last Summer, can we allow the Sun to go down on our wrath towards the *Autumn*, whose back we yet see on the horizon, before he turn about to bow adieu to our hemisphere? Hello! meet us half way in yonder immense field of potatoes, our worthy season, and among these peacemakers, the Mealies and the Waxies, shall we two smoke together the calumet or cigar of reconciliation. The floods fell, and the folk feared famine. The people whined over the smut in wheat, and pored pale on the Monthly Agricultural Report. Grain grew greener and greener—reapers stood at the crosses of villages, towns, and cities, passing from one to another comfortless quechs of sma' yill, with their straw-bound sickles hanging idle across their shoulders, and with unhired-looking faces, as ragged as if you were to dream of a Symposium of Scarecrows. Alarmed imagination beheld harvest treading on the heels of Christmas,

And Britain sadden'd at the long delay!”

when, whew! to dash the dismal predictions of foolish and false prophets, came rustling from all the airts, far, far and wide over the rain-drenched kingdom, the great armament of the Autumnal Winds! Groaned the grain,

as in sudden resurrection it lifted up its head, and knew that again the Sun was in Heaven. Death became Life; and the hearts of the husbandmen sang aloud for joy. Like Turks, the reapers brandished their sickles in the breezy light, and every field glittered with Christian crescents. Auld wives and bits o' weans mingled on the rig—kilted to the knees, like the comely cummers, and the handsome hizzies, and the lusome lassies wi' their silken snoods—among the heather-legged Highlandmen, and the bandy Irishers, brawny all, and with hook, scythe, or flail, inferior to none of the children of men. The scene lies in Scotland—but now, too, is England “Merry England” indeed, and outside passengers on a thousand coaches see stooks rising like stacks, and far and wide, over the tree-speckled champaign, rejoice in the sun-given promise of a glorious harvest-home. Intervenes the rest of two sunny Sabbaths sent to dry the brows of labour, and give the last ripeness to the overladen stalks that, top-heavy with alimant, fall over in their yellowy whiteness into the fast reaper's hands. Few fields now—but here and there one thin and greenish, of cold, unclean, or stony soil—are waving in the shadowy winds; for all are cleared, but some stooked stubbles from which the stooks are fast disappearing, as the huge wains seem to halt for a moment, impeded by the gates they hide, and then, crested perhaps with laughing boys and girls,

“Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings,”

no—not rings—for Beattie, in that admirable line, lets us hear a cart going out empty in the morning—but with a *cheerful dull* sound, ploughing along the black soil, *the clean dirt* almost up to the axletree, and then, as the wheels, rimmed you might always think with silver, reach the road, macadamized till it acts like a railway, how glides along downhill the moving mountain! And see now, the growing Stack glittering with a charge of pitchforks! The trams fly up from Dobbin's back, and a shoal of sheaves overflows the mire. Up they go, tossed from sinewy arms like feathers, and the Stack grows before your eyes, fairly proportioned as a beehive, without line or measure, but shaped by the look and the feel, true almost as the spring instinct of the nest-building bird. And are we not heartily ashamed of ourselves, amidst this general din of working mirthfulness, for having, but an hour ago, abused the jovial and generous Autumn, and thanked Heaven that he was dead? Let us retire into the barn with Shoosy, and hide our blushes.

Comparisons are odorous, and therefore for one paragraph let us compare AUTUMN with SPRING. Suppose ourselves sitting beneath THE SYCAMORE of Windermere! Poets call Spring Green-Mantle—and true it is that the groundwork of his garbis green—even like that of the proud peacock's changeful neck, when the creature treads in the circle of his own splendour, and the scholar who may have forgotten his classics, has yet a dream of Juno and of her watchful Argus with his hundred, his thousand eyes. But the coat of Spring,

like that of Joseph, is a coat of many colours. Call it patchwork if you choose,

“And be yourself the great sublime you draw.”

Some people look on nature with a milliner's or a mantua-maker's eye—arraying her in furbelows and flounces. But use your own eyes and ours, and from beneath THE SYCAMORE let us two, sitting together in amity, look lovingly on the SPRING. Felt ever your heart before, with such an emotion of harmonious beauty, the exquisitely delicate distinctions of character among the lovely tribes of trees! That is BELLE ISLE. Earliest to salute the vernal rainbow, with a glow of green gentle as its own, is the lake-loving ALDER, whose home, too, is by the flowings of all the streams. Just one degree fainter in its hue—or shall we rather say brighter—for we feel the difference without knowing in what it lies—stands, by the Alder's rounded softness, the spiral LARCH, all hung over its limber sprays, were you near enough to admire them, with cones of the Tyrian dye. The stem, white as silver, and smooth as silk, seen so straight in the green silvan light, and there airily overarching the coppice with lambent tresses, such as fancy might picture for the mermaid's hair, pleasant as is her life on that Fortunate Isle, is yet said by us, who vainly attribute our own sadness to ununsorrowing things—to belong to a Tree that *weeps*;—though a weight of joy it is, and of exceeding gladness, that thus depresses the BRANCH's pendent beauty, till it droops—as we think—like that of a being overcome with grief! Seen standing all along by themselves, with something of a foreign air and an exotic expression, yet not unwelcome or obtrusive among our indigenous fair forest-trees, twinkling to the touch of every wandering wind, and restless even amidst what seemeth now to be everlasting rest, we cannot choose but admire that somewhat darker grove of columnar Lombardy POPLARS. How comes it that some SYCAMORES so much sooner than others salute the spring? Yonder are some but budding, as if yet the frost lay on the honey-dew that protects the beamy germs. There are others warming into expansion, half-budded and half-leaved, with a various light of colour visible in that sun-glint distinctly from afar. And in that nook of the still sunnier south, trending eastward, a few are almost in their full summer foliage, and soon will the bees be swarming among their flowers. A HORSE CHESTNUT has a grand oriental air, and like a satrap uplifts his green banner yellowing in the light—that shows he belongs to the line of the Prophet. ELMS are then most magnificent—witness Christ-Church walk—when they hang overhead in heaven like the chancel of a cathedral. Yet here, too, are they august—and methinks “a dim religious light” is in that vault of branches just vivifying to the Spring, and though almost bare, tinged with a coming hue that erelong will be majestic brightness. Those old OAKS seem sullen in the sunshine, and slow to put forth their power, like the Spirit of the Land they emblem. But they, too, are relaxing from their wonted sternness—soon will that faint green be a glo

rious yellow; and while the gold-laden boughs stoop boldly to the storms with which they love to dally, bounds not the heart of every Briton to the music of his national anthem,

"Rule, Britannia,
Britannia, rule the waves!"

The Ash is a manly tree, but "dreigh and dour" in the leafing; and yonder stands an Ash-grove like a forest of ships with bare poles like the docks of Liverpool. Yet like the town of Kilkenny

"It shines well where it stands;"

and the bare gray-blue of the branches, apart but not repulsive, like some cunning discord in music deepens the harmony of the Isle of Groves. Contrast is one of the finest of all the laws of association, as every philosopher, poet, and peasant kens. At this moment it brings, by the bonds of beauty, though many glades intervene, close beside that pale gray-blue, leafless Ash Clump, that bright black-green PINE CLAN, whose "leaf fadeth never," a glorious Scottish tartan triumphing in the English woods. Though many glades intervene, we said; for thou seest that BELLE ISLE is not all one various flush of wood, but bedropt all over—bedropt and besprinkled with grass-gems, some cloud-shadowed, some tree-shaded, some mist-bedimmed, and some luminous as small soil-suns, on which as the eye alights, it feels soothed and strengthened, and gifted with a profounder power to see into the mystery of the beauty of nature. But what are those living Hills of snow, or of some substance purer in its brightness even than any snow that fades in one night on the mountain-top! Trees are they—fruit-trees—The WILD CHERRY, that grows stately and wide spreading even as the monarch of the wood—and can that be a load of blossoms! Fairer never grew before poet's eye of old in the fabled Hesperides. See how what we call snow brightens into pink—yet still the whole glory is white, and fadeth not away the purity of the balmy snow-blush. Ay, balmy as the bliss breathing from virgin lips, when, moving in the beauty left by her morning prayers, a glad fond daughter steals towards him on the feet of light, and as his arms open to receive and return the blessing, lays her innocence with smiles that are almost tears, within her father's bosom.

"As when to those who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabon odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a
league,
Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles."

Shut your eyes—suppose five months gone—and lo! BELLE ISLE in Autumn, like a scene in another hemisphere of our globe. There is a slight frost in the air, in the sky, on the lake, and midday is as still as midnight. But, though still, it is cheerful; for close at hand Robin Redbreast—God bless him!—is warbling on the copestone of that old barn gable; and though Millar-Ground Bay is half a mile off, how distinct the clank of the two oars like

one, accompanying that large wood-boat on its slow voyage from Ambleside to Bowness, the metropolitan port of the Queen of the Lakes. The water has lost, you see, its summer sunniness, yet it is as transparent as ever it was in summer; and how close together seem, with their almost meeting shadows, the two opposite shores! But we wish you to look at BELLE ISLE, though we ourselves are almost afraid to do so, so transcendently glorious is the sight that we know will disturb us with an emotion too deep to be endured. Could you not think that a splendid sunset had fallen down in fragments on the Isle called Beautiful, and set it all a-blaze! The woods are on fire, yet they burn not; beauty subdues while it fosters the flame; and there, as in a many-tented tabernacle, has Colour pitched his royal residence, and reigns in glory beyond that of any Oriental king. What are all the canopies, and balconies, and galleries of human state, all hung with the richest drapery that ever the skill of Art, that Wizard, drew forth in gorgeous folds from his enchanted loom, if ideally suspended in the air of imagination beside the sun-and-storm-stained furniture of these Palaces of Autumn, framed by the Spirit of the Season, of living and dying umbrage, for his latest delight, ere he move in annual migration, with all his Court, to some foreign clime far beyond the seas! No names of trees are remembered—a glorious confusion comprehends in one the whole leafy race—orange, and purple, and scarlet, and crimson, are all seen to be there, and interfused through the silent splendour is aye felt the presence of that terrestrial green, native and unextinguishable in earth's bosom, as that celestial blue is that of the sky. That trance goes by, and the spirit, gradually filled with a stiller delight, takes down all those tents into pieces, and contemplates the encampment with less of imagination, and with more of love. It knows and blesses each one of those many glorious groves, each becoming, as it gazes, less and less glorious, more and more beautiful; till memory revives all the happiest and holiest hours of the Summer and the Spring, and re-peoples the melancholy umbrage with a thousand visions of joy, that may return never more! Images, it may be, of forms and faces now mouldering in the dust! For as human hearts have felt, and all human lips have declared—melancholy making poets of us all, ay, even prophets—till the pensive air of Autumn has been filled with the music of elegiac and foreboding hymns—as is the Race of Leaves—now old Homer speaks—so is the Race of Men! Nor till time shall have an end, insensate will be any creature endowed "with discourse of reason" to those mysterious misgivings, alternating with triumphant aspirations more mysterious still, when the Religion of nature leans in awe on the Religion of God, and we hear the voice of both in such strains as these—the earthly, in its sadness, momentarily deadening the divine:—

"But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn?
Oh! when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?"

SECOND RHAPSODY.

HAVE we not been speaking of all the Seasons as belonging to the masculine gender? They are generally, we believe, in this country, painted in petticoats, apparently by bagmen, as may be daily seen in the pretty prints that bedeck the paper-walls of the parlours of inns. Spring is always there represented as a spanker in a blue symar, very pertly exposing her budding breast, and her limbs from feet to fork, in a style that must be very offensive to the mealy-mouthed members of that shamefaced corporation, the Society for the Suppression of Vice. She holds a flower between her finger and her thumb, crocus, violet, or primrose; and though we verily believe she means no harm, she no doubt does look rather leeringly upon you, like one of the frail sisterhood of the Come-atables. Summer again is an enormous and monstrous maysey, in *puris naturalibus*, meant to image Musidora, or the Medicean, or rather the Hot-tentot Venus.

"So stands the statue that enchants the world!"

She seems, at the very lightest, a good round half hundred heavier than Spring; and, when you imagine her plunging into the pool, you think you hear a porpus. May no Damon run away with her clothes, leaving behind in exchange his heart! Gaddies are rife in the dog-days, and should one "imparadise himself in form of that sweet flesh," there will be a cry in the woods that will speedily bring to her assistance Pan and all his Satyrs. Autumn is a motherly matron, evidently *enceinte*, and, like Love and Charity, who probably are smiling on the opposite wall, she has a brace of bouncing babies at her breast—in her right hand a formidable sickle, like a Turkish scymitar—in her left an extraordinary utensil, bearing, we believe, the heathenish appellation of cornucopia—on her back a sheaf of wheat—and on her head a diadem—planted there by John Barleycorn. She is a fearsome dear; as ugly a customer as a lonely man would wish to encounter beneath the light of a September moon. On her feet are bauchles—on her legs huggers—and the breadth of her soles, and the thickness of her ankles, we leave to your own conjectures. Her fine bust is conspicuous in an open laced boddice—and her huge hips are set off to the biggest advantage, by a jacket that she seems to have picked up by the wayside, after some jolly tar, on his return from a long voyage, had there been performing his toilet, and, by getting rid of certain incumbances, enabled to pursue his inland journey with less resemblance than before to a walking scarecrow. Winter is a withered old beldam, too poor to keep a cat, hunkling on her hunkers over a feeble fire of sticks, extinguished fast as it is beeted, with a fizz in the melted snow which all around that un-housed wretchedness is indurated with frost; while a blue pool close at hand is chained in iciness, and an old stump, half buried in the drift. Poor old, miserable, cowering crone! One cannot look at her without unconsciously putting one's hand in his pocket, and fumbling for a tester. Yes, there is pathos in the picture,

especially while, on turning round your head, you behold a big blockhead of a vulgar bagman, with his coat-tails over his arms, warming his loathsome hideousness at a fire that would roast an ox.

Such are the Seasons! And though we have spoken of them, as mere critics on art, somewhat superciliously, yet there is almost always no inconsiderable merit in all prints, pictures, paintings, poems, or prose-works, that—pardon our tautology—are popular with the people. The emblematical figments now alluded to, have been the creations of persons of genius, who had never had access to the works of the old masters; so that, though the conception is good, the execution is, in general, far from perfect. Yet many a time, when lying at our ease in a Wayside Inn, stretched on three wooden chairs, with a little round deal-table before us, well laden with oat-meal cakes and cheese and butter, nor, you may be sure, without its "tappit hen"—have we after a long day's journey—perhaps the longest day—

"Through moors and mosses many, O,"

regarded with no imaginative spirit—when Joseph and his brethren were wanting—even such symbols of the Seasons as these—while arose to gladden us many as fair an image as ever nature sent from her woods and wildernesses to cheer the heart of her worshipper who, on his pilgrimage to her loftiest shrines, and most majestic temples, spared not to stoop his head below the lowest lintel, and held all men his equal who earned by honest industry the scanty fare which they never ate without those holy words of supplication and thanksgiving, "Give us this day our daily bread!"

Our memory is a treasure-house of written and unwritten poetry—the ingots, the gifts of the great bards, and the bars of bullion—much of the coin our own—some of it borrowed mayhap, but always on good security, and repaid with interest—a legal transaction, of which even a not unwealthy man has no need to be ashamed—none of it stolen, nor yet found where the Highlandman found the tongs. But our riches are like those that encumbered the floor of the Sanctum of the Dey of Algiers, not very tidily arranged; and we are frequently foiled in our efforts to lay our hand, for immediate use or ornament, on a ducat or a diamond, a pistol or a pearl, a sovereign, or only his crown. We feel ourselves at this moment in that predicament, when trying to recollect the genders of Thomson's "Seasons!"—

"Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend!"

That picture is indistinctly and obscurely beautiful to the imagination, and there is not a syllable about sex—though "ethereal mildness," which is an Impersonation, and hardly an Impersonation, must be, it is felt, a Virgin Goddess, whom all the divinities that dwell between heaven and earth must love. Never to our taste—but our taste is inferior to our feeling and our genius—though you will seldom go far wrong even in trusting it—never had a poem a more beautiful beginning. It is not simple—nor ought it to be—it is rich, and even

gorgeous—for the Bard came to his subject full of inspiration; and as it was the inspiration, here, not of profound thought, but of passionate emotion, it was right that music at the very first moment should overflow the page, and that it should be literally strewn with roses. An imperfect Impersonation is often proof positive of the highest state of poetical enthusiasm. The forms of nature undergo a half humanizing process under the intensity of our love, yet still retain the character of the insensate creation, thus affecting us with a sweet, strange, almost bewildering, blended emotion that scarcely belongs to either separately, but to both together clings as to a phenomenon that only the eye of genius sees, because only the soul of genius can give it a presence—though afterwards all eyes dimly recognise it, on its being shown to them, as something more vivid than their own faint experience, yet either kindred to it, or virtually one and the same. Almost all human nature can, in some measure, understand and feel the most exquisite and recondite image which only the rarest genius could produce. Were it not so, great poets might break their harps, and go down themselves in Helicon.

"From brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the Sun, refulgent SUMMER comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth:
He comes attended by the sultry hours;
And ever-fanning breezes, on his way;
While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
Averts her blushful face, and earth, and skies,
All smiling, to his hot dominion leaves."

Here the Impersonation is stronger—and perhaps the superior strength lies in the words "child of the Sun." And here in the words describing Spring, she too is more of an Impersonation than in the other passage—averting her blushful face from the Summer's ardent look. The poet having made Summer masculine, very properly makes Spring feminine; and 'tis a jewel of a picture—for ladies should always avert their blushful faces from the ardent looks of gentlemen. Thomson, indeed, elsewhere says of an enamoured youth overpowered by the loving looks of his mistress,—

"From the keen gaze her lover turns away,
Full of the dear ecstatic power, and sick
With sighing languishment."

This, we have heard, from experienced persons of both sexes, is as delicate as it is natural; but for our own simple and single selves, we never remember having got sick on any such occasion. Much agitated, we cannot deny—if we did, the most credulous would not credit us—much agitated we have been—when our lady-love, not contented with fixing upon us her dove-eyes, began billing and cooing in a style from which the cushat might have taken a lesson with advantage, that she might the better perform her innocent part on her first assignation with her affianced in the pine-grove on St. Valentine's day; but never in all our long lives got we absolutely sick—nor even *squeamish*—never were we obliged to turn away with our head to our mouth—but, on the contrary, we were commonly as brisk as a bee at a pot of honey; or, if that be too luscious a simile, as brisk as that same wonderful insect murmuring for a few moments

round and round a rose-bush, and then settling himself down seriously to work, as mute as a mouse, among the half-blown petals. However, we are not now writing our Confessions—and what we wished to say about this passage is, that in it the one sex is represented as turning away the face from that of the other, which may be all natural enough, though polite on the gentleman's part we can never call it; and, had the female virgin done so, we cannot help thinking it would have read better in poetry. But for Spring to avert *his* blushful face from the ardent looks of Summer, has on us the effect of making both Seasons seem simpletons. Spring, in the character of "ethereal mildness," was unquestionably a female; but here she is "unsexed from the crown to the toe," and changed into an awkward hobbler—hoy, who, having passed his boyhood in the country, is a booby who blushes black at the gaze of his own brother, and if brought into the company of the lasses, would not fail to faint away in a fit, nor revive till his face felt a pitcherful of cold water.

"Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on," &c.,

is, we think, bad. The Impersonation here is complete, and though the sex of Autumn is not mentioned, it is manifestly meant to be male. So far, there is nothing amiss either one way or another. But "nodding o'er the yellow plain" is a mere statement of a fact in nature—and descriptive of the growing and ripening or ripened harvest—whereas it is applied here to Autumn, as a figure who "comes jovial on." This is not obscurity—or indistinctness—which, as we have said before, is often a great beauty in Impersonation; but it is an inconsistency and a contradiction—and therefore indefensible on any ground either of conception or expression.

There are no such essential vices as this in the "Castle of Indolence"—for by that time Thomson had subjected his inspiration to thought—and his poetry, guided and guarded by philosophy, became celestial as an angel's song.

"See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train,
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme,
These! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms!
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless Solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wander'd through your rough domain;
Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrents burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd
In the grim evening sky. Thus pass'd the time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and smiled!"

Divine inspiration indeed! Poetry, that if read by the bedside of a dying lover of nature, might

"Create a soul
Under the ribs of death!"

What in the name of goodness makes us suppose that a mean and miserable November day, even while we are thus Rhapsodizing, is drizzling all Edinburgh with the worst of all imaginable Scottish mists—an Easterly Harr?

We know that he infests all the year, but shows his poor spite in its bleakest bitterness in March and in November. Earth and heaven are not only not worth looking at in an Easterly Harr, but the Visible is absolute wretchedness, and people wonder why they were born. The visitation begins with a sort of characterless haze, waxing more and more wetly obscure, till you know not whether it be rain, snow, or sleet, that drenches your clothes in dampness, till you feel it in your skin, then in your flesh, then in your bones, then in your marrow, and then in your mind. Your blinking eyes have it too—and so, shut it as you will, has your moping mouth. Yet the streets, though looking blue, are not puddled, and the dead cat lies dry in the gutter. There is no eaves-dropping—no gushing of water-spouts. To say it rained would be no breach of veracity, but a mere misstatement of a melancholy fact. The truth is, that *the weather cannot rain*, but keeps spit, spit, spitting, in a style sufficient to irritate Socrates—or even Moses himself; and yet true, veritable, sincere, genuine, and authentic Rain could not—or if he could would not—so thoroughly soak you and your whole wardrobe, were you to allow him a day to do it, as that shabby imitation of a tenth-rate shower, in about the time of an usual sized sermon. So much cold and so much wet, with so little to show for it, is a disgrace to the atmosphere, which it will take weeks of the sunniest weather can afford to wipe off. But the stores of sunniness which it is in the power of Winter in this northern latitude to accumulate, cannot be immense; and therefore we verily believe that it would be too much to expect that it ever can make amends for the hideous horrors of this Easterly Harr. The Cut-throat!

On such days suicides rush to judgment. That sin is mysterious as insanity—their graves are unintelligible as the cells in Bedlam. Oh! the brain and the heart of man! Therein is the only Hell. Small these regions in space, and of narrow room—but haunted may they be with all the Fiends and all the Furies. A few nerves transmit to the soul despair or bliss. At the touch of something—whence and wherefore sent, who can say—something that serenens or troubles, soothes or jars—she soars up into life and light, just as you may have seen a dove suddenly cleave the sunshine—or down she dives into death and darkness, like a shot eagle tumbling into the sea!

Materialism! Immaterialism! Why should mortals, whom conscience tells that they are immortals, bewildered and bewildering ponder upon the dust! Do your duty to God and man, and fear not that, when that dust dies, the spirit that breathed by it will live for ever. Feels not that spirit its immortality in each sacred thought? When did ever religious soul fear annihilation? Or shudder to think that, having once known, it could ever forget God? Such forgetfulness is in the idea of eternal death. Therefore is eternal death impossible to us who can hold communion with our Maker. Our knowledge of Him—dim and remote though it be—is a God-given pledge that he will redeem us from the doom of the grave.

Let us then, and all our friends, believe, with Coleridge, in his beautiful poem of the "Night-ingle," that

"In Nature there is nothing melancholy,"

not even November. The disease of the body may cause disease in the soul; yet not the less trust we in the mercy of the merciful—not the less strive we to keep feeding and trimming that spiritual lamp which is within us, even when it flickers feebly in the dampy gloom, like an earthly lamp left in a vaulted sepulchre, about to die among the dead. Heaven seems to have placed a power in our Will as mighty as it is mysterious. Call it not Liberty, lest you should wax proud; call it not Necessity, lest you should despair. But turn from the oracles of man—still dim even in their clearest responses—to the Oracles of God, which are never dark; or if so, but

"Dark with excessive bright"

to eyes not constantly accustomed to sustain the splendour. Bury all your books, when you feel the night of skepticism gathering around you—bury them all, powerful though you may have deemed their spells to illuminate the unfathomable—open your Bible, and all the spiritual world will be as bright as day.

The disease of the body may cause disease to the soul. Ay, madness. Some rapture in the soul makes the brain numb, and thence sudden or lingering death;—some rupture in the brain makes the soul insane, and thence life worse than death, and haunted by horrors beyond what is dreamt of the grave and all its corruption. Perhaps the line fullest of meaning that ever was written, is—

"Mens sana in corpore sano."

When nature feels the flow of its vital blood pure and unimpeded, what unutterable gladness bathes the spirit in that one feeling of—health! Then the mere consciousness of existence is like that emotion which Milton speaks of as breathed from the bowers of Paradise—

"Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair;"

It does more—for despair itself cannot prevail against it. What a dawn of bliss rises upon us with the dawn of light, when our life is healthful as the sun! Then

"It feels that it is greater than it knows."

God created the earth and the air beautiful through the senses; and at the uplifting of a little lid, a whole flood of imagery is let in upon the spirit, all of which becomes part of its very self, as if the enjoying and the enjoyed were one. Health flies away like an angel, and her absence disenchant the earth. What shadows then pass over the ethereal surface of the spirit, from the breath of disordered matter!—from the first scarcely-felt breath of despondency, to the last scowling blackness of despair! Often men know not what power placed the fatal fetters upon them—they see even that a link may be open, and that one effort might fling off the bondage; but their souls are in slavery, and will not be free. Till something like a fresh wind, or a sudden sunbeam, comes across them, and in a moment their whole existence is changed, and they see the very va-

nishing of their most dismal and desperate dream.

"Somewhat too much of this"—so let us strike the chords to a merrier measure—to a "livelier lilt"—as suits the variable spirit of our Soliloquy. Be it observed, then, that the sole certain way of getting rid of the blue devils, is to drown them in a shower-bath. You would not suppose that we are subject to the blue devils? Yet we are sometimes their very slave. When driven to it by their lash, every occupation, which when free we resort to as pastime, becomes taskwork; nor will these dogged masters suffer us to purchase emancipation with the proceeds of the toil of our groaning genius. But whenever the worst comes to the worst, and we almost wish to die so that we might escape the galling pressure of our chains, we sport buff, and into the shower-bath. Yet such is the weakness of poor human nature, that like a criminal on the scaffold, shifting the signal kerchief from hand to hand, much to the irritation of his excellency the hangman, one of the most impatient of men—and more to the satisfaction of the crowd, the most patient of men and women—we often stand shut up in that sentry-looking canvas box, dexterously and sinistrously fingering the string, perhaps for five shrinking, and shuddering, and *grueing* minutes, ere we can summon up desperation to pull down upon ourselves the rushing waterfall! Soon as the agony is over, we bounce out the colour of beet-root, and survey ourselves in a five-foot mirror, with an amazement that, on each successive exhibition, is still as when we first experienced it,

"In life's morning march, when our spirits were young."

By and by, we assume the similitude of an immense boiled lobster that has leapt out of the pan—and then, seeming for a while to be an emblematical or symbolical representation of the setting Sun, we sober down into a faint pink, like that of the Morn, and finally subside into our own permanent flesh-light, which, as we turn our back upon ourselves, after the fashion of some of his majesty's ministers, reminds us of that line in Cowper descriptive of the November Moon—

"Resplendent less, but of an ampler round."

Like that of the eagle, our youth is renewed—we feel strong as the horse in Homer—a divine glow permeates our being, as if it were the subdued spiritual essence of caloric. An intense feeling of self—not self-love, mind ye, and the farthest state imaginable in this wide world from selfishness—elevates us far up above the clouds, into the loftiest regions of the sunny blue, and we seem to breathe an atmosphere, of which every glorious gulp is inspiration. Despondency is thrown to the dogs. Despair appears in his true colours, a more grotesque idiot than Grimaldi, and we treat him with a guffaw. All ante-bath difficulties seem now—what they really are—facilities of which we are by far too much elated to avail ourselves; dangers that used to appear appalling are felt now to be lulling securities—obstacles, like mountains, lying in our way of life as we walked towards the tem-

ple of Apollo or Plutus, we smile at the idea of surmounting, so molehillish do they look, and we kick them aside like an old footstool. Let the country ask us for a scheme to pay off the national debt—*there she has it*; do you request us to have the kindness to leap over the moon—here we go; excellent Mr. Blackwood has but to say the word, and a ready-made Leading Article is in his hand, promotive of the sale of countless numbers of "my Magazine," and of the happiness of countless numbers of mankind. We feel—and the feeling proves the fact—as bold as Joshua the son of Nun—as brave as David the son of Jesse—as wise as Solomon the son of David—and as proud as Nebuchadnezzar the son of Nebopolazzar. We survey our image in the mirror—and think of Adam. We put ourselves into the posture of the Belvidere Apollo.

"Then view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life, and poesy, and light,
The Sun in human arms array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight.
The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright
With an immortal vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity."

Up four flight of stairs we fly—for the bath is in the double-sunk story—ten steps at a bound—and in five minutes have devoured one quarter loaf, six eggs, and a rizzar, washing all over with a punch-bowl of congou and a tea-bowl of coffee,

"Enormous breakfast,
Wild without rule or art! Where nature plays
Her virgin fancies."

And then, leaning back on our Easy-chair, we perform an exploit beyond the reach of Euclid—why, we SQUARE THE CIRCLE, and to the utter demolition of our admirable friend Sir David Brewster's diatribe, in a late number of the *Quarterly Review*, on the indifference of government to men of science, chuckle over our nobly-won order, K. C. C. B., Knight Companion of the Cold Bath.

Many analogies between the seasons of the year and the seasons of life, being natural, have been a frequent theme of poetry in all countries. Had the gods made us poetical, we should now have poured forth a few exquisite illustrations of some that are very affecting and impressive. It has, however, often been felt by us, that not a few of those one meets with in the lamentations of whey-faced sentimentalists, are false or fantastic, and do equal violence to all the seasons, both of the year and of life. These gentry have been especially silly upon the similitude of Old Age to Winter. Winter, in external nature, is not the season of decay. An old tree, for example, in the very *dead* of winter, as it is figuratively called, though bare of leaves, is full of life. The sap, indeed, has sunk down from his bole and branches—down into his toes or roots. But there it is, ready, in due time, to reascend. Not so with an old man—the present company always excepted,—his sap is not sunk down to his toes, but much of it is gone clean out of the system—therefore, individual natural objects in Winter are not analogically emblematical of people stricken in years. Far less does the Winter itself of the year, considered as a sea-

son, resemble the old age of life considered as a season. To what peculiarities, pray, in the character and conduct of aged gentlemen in general, do rain, sleet, hail, frost, ice, snow, winds, blasts, storms, hurricanes, and occasional thunder and lightning, bear analogy? We pause for a reply. Old men's heads, it is true, are frequently white, though more frequently bald, and their blood is not so hot as when they were springalds. But though there be no great harm in likening a sprinkling of white hair on mine ancient's temples to the appearance of the surface of the earth, flat or mountainous, after a slight fall of snow—and indeed, in an impassioned state of mind, we feel a moral beauty in such poetical expression as “sorrow shedding on the head of youth its untimely snows”—yet the natural propriety of such an image, so far from justifying the assertion of a general analogy between Winter and Old Age, proves that the analogies between them are in fact very few, and felt to be analogies at all, only when touched upon very seldom, and very slightly, and, for the most part, very vaguely—the truth being, that they scarcely exist at all in reality, but have an existence given to them by the power of creative passion, which often works like genius. Shakspeare knew this well—as he knew every thing else; and, accordingly, he gives us Seven Ages of Life—not Four Seasons. But how finely does he sometimes, by the mere use of the names of the Seasons of the Year, intensify to our imagination the mental state to which they are for the moment felt to be analogous?—

“Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by the sun of York!”

That will do. The feeling he wished to inspire, is inspired; and the further analogical images which follow add nothing to *our* feelings, though they show the strength and depth of *his* into whose lips they are put. A bungler would have bored us with ever so many ramifications of the same idea, on one of which, in our weariness, we might have wished him hanged by the neck till he was dead.

We are an Old Man, and though single not singular; yet, without vanity, we think ourselves entitled to say, that we are no more like Winter, in particular, than we are like Spring, Summer, or Autumn. The truth is, that we are much less like any one of the Seasons, than we are like the whole Set. Is not Spring sharp? So are we. Is not Spring snappish? So are we. Is not Spring boisterous? So are we. Is not Spring “beautiful exceedingly?” So are we. Is not Spring capricious? So are we. Is not Spring, at times, the gladdest, gay-

est, gentlest, mildest, meekest, modestest, softest, sweetest, and sunniest of all God's creatures that steal along the face of the earth? So are we. So much for our similitude—a staring and striking one—to Spring. But were you to stop there, what an inadequate idea would you have of our character! For only ask your senses, and they will tell you that we are much liker Summer. Is not Summer often infernally hot? So are we. Is not Summer sometimes cool as its own cucumbers? So are we. Does not summer love the shade? So do we. Is not Summer, nevertheless, somewhat “too much i' the sun?” So are we. Is not Summer famous for its thunder and lightning? So are we. Is not summer, when he chooses, still, silent, and serene as a sleeping seraph? And so too—when Christopher chooses—are not we? Though, with keen remorse we confess it, that, when suddenly awakened, we are too often more like a fury or a fiend—and that completes the likeness; for all who know a Scottish Summer, with one voice exclaim—“So is he!” But our portrait is but half-drawn; you know but a moiety of our character. Is Autumn jovial?—ask Thomson—so are we. Is Autumn melancholy?—ask Alison and Gillespie—so are we. Is Autumn bright?—ask the woods and groves—so are we. Is Autumn rich?—ask the whole world—so are we. Does Autumn rejoice in the yellow grain and the golden vintage, that, stored up in his great Magazine of Nature, are lavishly thence dispensed to all that hunger, and quench the thirst of the nations? So do we. After that, no one can be so pure and bat-blind as not see that North is, in very truth, Autumn's gracious self, rather than his Likeness or Eidolon. But

“Lo, Winter comes to rule th' inverted year!”

So do we.

“Sullen and sad, with all his rising train—
Vapours, and clouds, and storms!”

So are we. The great author of the “Seasons” says, that Winter and his train

“Exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing!”

So do we. And, “lest aught less great should stamp us mortal,” here we conclude the comparison, dashed off in few lines by the hand of a great master, and ask, Is not North, Winter? Thus, listener after our own heart! Thou feel'st that we are imaged aright in all our attributes neither by Spring, nor Summer, nor Autumn, nor Winter; but that the character of Christopher is shadowed forth and reflected by the Entire Year.

A FEW WORDS ON THOMSON.

POETRY, one might imagine, must be full of Snow-scenes. If so, they have almost all dissolved—melted away from our memory—as the transiencies in nature do which they coldly pictured. Thomson's "Winter," of course, we do not include in our obliviousness—and from Cowper's "Task" we might quote many a most picturesque Snow-piece. But have frost and snow been done full justice to by them or any other of our poets? They have been well spoken of by two—Southey and Coleridge—of whose most poetical compositions respectively, "Thalaba" and the "Ancient Mariner," in some future volume we may dissert. Thomson's genius does not so often delight us by exquisite minute touches in the description of nature as that of Cowper. It loves to paint on a great scale, and to dash objects off sweepingly by bold strokes—such, indeed, as have almost always distinguished the mighty masters of the lyre and the rainbow. Cowper sets nature before your eyes—Thomson before your imagination. Which do you prefer? Both. Be assured that both poets had pored night and day upon her—in all her aspects—and that she had revealed herself fully to both. But they, in their religion, elected different modes of worship—and both were worthy of the mighty mother. In one mood of mind we love Cowper best, in another Thomson. Sometimes the Seasons are almost a Task, and sometimes the Task is out of Season. There is delightful distinctness in all the pictures of the Bard of Olney—glorious gloom or glimmer in most of those of the Bard of Ednam. Cowper paints trees—Thomson woods. Thomson paints, in a few wondrous lines, rivers from source to sea, like the mighty Burrampooter—Cowper, in many no very wondrous lines, brightens up one bend of a stream, or awakens our fancy to the murmur of some single waterfall. But a truce to antithesis—a deceptive style of criticism—and see how Thomson sings of Snow. Why, in the following lines, as well as Christopher North in his Winter Rhapsody—

"The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current."

Nothing can be more vivid. 'Tis of the nature of an ocular spectrum.

Here is a touch like one of Cowper's. Note the beauty of the epithet "brown," where all that is motionless is white—

"The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants."

That one word proves the poet. Does it not?

The entire description from which these two sentences are selected by memory—a critic you may always trust to—is admirable; except in one or two places where Thomson seems to have striven to be strongly pathetic,

and where he seems to us to have overshot his mark, and to have ceased to be perfectly natural. Thus—

"Drooping, the ox
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil."

The image of the ox is as good as possible. We see him, and could paint him in oils. But, to our mind, the notion of his "demanding the fruit of all his toils"—to which we freely acknowledge the worthy animal was well entitled—sounds, as it is here expressed, rather fantastical. Call it doubtful—for Jemmy was never utterly in the wrong in any sentiment. Again—

"The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair."

The second line is perfect; but the Ettrick Shepherd agreed with us—one night at Ambrose's—that the third was not quite right. Sheep, he agreed with us, do not deliver themselves up to despair under any circumstances; and here Thomson transferred what would have been his own feeling in a corresponding condition, to animals who dreadlessly follow their instincts. Thomson redeems himself in what immediately succeeds—

"Then, sad dispersed,
Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow."

For, as they disperse, they do look very sad—and no doubt are so; but had they been in despair, they would not so readily, and constantly, and uniformly, and successfully, have taken to the digging, but whole flocks had perished.

You will not, we are confident, be angry with us for quoting a few lines that occur soon after, and which are a noble example of the sweeping style of description which, we said above, characterizes the genius of this sublime poet:—

"From the bellowing east
In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The billowy tempest whelms; till upward urged,
The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipp'd with a wreath high-curling in the sky."

Well might the bard, with such a snow-storm in his imagination, when telling the shepherds to be kind to their helpless charge, address them in a language which, in an ordinary mood, would have been bombast. "Shepherds," says he, "baffle the raging year!" How? Why merely by filling their pens with food. But the whirlwind was up—

"Far off its coming groan'd,"

and the poet was inspired. Had he not been so, he had not cried, "Baffle the raging year;" and if you be not so, you will think it a most absurd expression.

Did you ever see water beginning to change itself into ice? Yes. Then try to describe the sight. Success in that trial will prove you a poet. People do not prove themselves poets only by writing long poems. A line—two words—may show that they are the Muse's sons. How exquisitely does Burns picture to our eyes moonlight water undergoing an ice-change!

"The chilly frost beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently crusting o'er the glittering stream!"

Thomson does it with an almost finer spirit of perception—or conception—or memory—or whatever else you choose to call it; for our part, we call it genius—

"An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream."

And afterwards, having frozen the entire stream into a "crystal pavement," how strongly doth he conclude thus—

"The whole imprisoned river grows below."

Here, again, 'tis pleasant to see the peculiar genius of Cowper contrasted with that of Thomson. The gentle Cowper delighting, for the most part, in tranquil images—for his life was passed amidst tranquil nature; the enthusiastic Thomson, more pleased with images of power. Cowper says—

"On the flood,
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved, while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away."

How many thousand times the lines we are now going to quote have been quoted, nobody can tell; but we quote them once more for the purpose of asking you, if you think that any one poet of this age could have written them—could have chilled one's very blood with such intense feeling of cold! Not one.

"In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate seal'd, he, with his hapless crew,
Each full exerted at his several task,
Froze into statues; to the cordage glued
The sailor, and the pilot to the helm!"

The oftener—the more we read the "Winter"—especially the last two or three hundred lines—the angrier is our wonder with Wordsworth for asserting that Thomson owed the national popularity that his "Winter" immediately won, to his "commonplace sentimentalities, and his vicious style!" Yet true it is, that he was sometimes guilty of both; and, but for his transcendent genius, they might have obscured the lustre of his fame. But such sins are not very frequent in the "Seasons," and were all committed in the glow of that fine and bold enthusiasm, which to his imagination arrayed all things, and all words, in a light that seemed to him at the time to be poetry—though sometimes it was but "false glitter." Admitting, then, that sometimes the style of the "Seasons" is somewhat too florid, we must not criticise single and separate passages, without holding in mind the character of the poet's genius and his inspirations. He luxuriates—he revels—he wantons—at once with an imaginative and a sensuous delight in nature. Besides, he was but young; and his

great work was his first. He had not philosophized his poetical language, as Wordsworth himself has done, after long years of profoundest study of the laws of thought and speech. But in such study, while much is gained, may not something be lost? And is there not a charm in the free, flowing, chartered libertinism of the diction and versification of the "Seasons"—above all, in the closing strains of the "Winter," and in the whole of the "Hymn," which inspires a delight and wonder seldom breathed upon us—glorious poem, on the whole, as it is—from the more measured march of the "Excursion!"

All those children of the Pensive Public who have been much at school, know Thomson's description of the wolves among the Alps, Appennines, and Pyrenees,

"Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood, bony and gaunt and grim!" &c.

The first fifteen lines are equal to any thing in the whole range of English descriptive poetry; but the last ten are positively bad. Here they are—

"The godlike face of man avails him nought!
Even beauty, force divine! at whose bright glance
The generous lion stands in soften'd gaze,
Now bleeds, a hapless undistinguish'd prey.
But if, apprized of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
On churchyard drear, (inhuman to relate!)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The shrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
Mix'd with foul shades and frighted ghosts, they howl!"

Wild beasts do not like the look of the human eye—they think us ugly customers—and sometimes stand shilly-shallying in our presence, in an awkward but alarming attitude, of hunger mixed with fear. A single wolf seldom or never attacks a man. He cannot stand the face. But a person would need to have a godlike face indeed to terrify therewith an army of wolves some thousand strong. It would be the height of presumption in any man, though beautiful as Moore thought Byron, to attempt it. If so, then

"The godlike face of man avails him nought,"

is, under the circumstances, ludicrous. Still more so is the trash about "beauty, force divine!" It is too much to expect of an army of wolves some thousand strong, "and hungry as the grave," that they should all fall down on their knees before a sweet morsel of flesh and blood, merely because the young lady was so beautiful that she might have sat to Sir Thomas Lawrence for a frontispiece to Mr. Watts's Souvenir. 'Tis all stuff, too, about the generous lion standing in softened gaze at beauty's bright glance. True, he has been known to look with a certain sort of soft surliness upon a pretty Caffre girl, and to walk past without eating her—but simply because, an hour or two before, he had dined on a Hot-tentot Venus. The secret lay not in his heart, but in his stomach. Still the notion is a popular one, and how exquisitely has Spenser changed it into the divinest poetry in the character of the attendant lion of

"Heavenly Una, with her milkwhite lamb!"

But Thomson, so far from making poetry of it in this passage, has vulgarized and blurred by

it the natural and inevitable emotion of terror and pity. Famished wolves *howling* up the dead is a dreadful image—but "*inhuman to relate*," is not an expression heavily laden with meaning; and the sudden, abrupt, violent, and, as we feel, unnatural introduction of ideas purely superstitious, at the close, is revolting, and miserably mars the terrible *truth*.

"Mix'd with foul shades and frighted ghosts, they howl."

Why, pray, are the shades foul, and the ghosts only frightened? And wherein lies the specific difference between a shade and a ghost? Besides, if the ghosts were frightened, which they had good reason to be, why were not they off? We have frequently read of their wandering far from home, on occasions when they had no such excellent excuse to offer. This line, therefore, we have taken the liberty to erase from our pocket-copy of the Seasons—and to draw a few keelavine strokes over the rest of the passage—beginning with "man's godlike face."

Go read, then, the opening of "Winter," and acknowledge that, of all climates and all countries, there are none within any of the zones of earth that will bear a moment's comparison with those of Scotland. Forget the people if you can, and think only of the region. The lovely Lowlands undulating away into the glorious Highlands—the spirit of sublimity and the spirit of beauty one and the same, as it blends them in indissoluble union. Bury us alive in the dungeon's gloom—incommunicable with the light of day as the grave—it could not seal our eyes to the sight of Scotland. We should see it still by rising or by setting suns. Whatever blessed scene we chose to call on would become an instant apparition. Nor in that thick-ribbed vault would our eyes be deaf to her rivers and her seas. We should say our prayers to their music, and to the voice of the thunder on a hundred hills. We stand now in no need of senses. They are waxing dim—but our spirit may continue to brighten long as the light of love is allowed to dwell therein, thence proceeding over nature like a victorious morn.

There are many beautiful passages in the poets about RAIN; but who ever sang its advent so passionately as in these strains!—

"The effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distant.
At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep
Sits on th' horizon round a settled gloom:
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm, that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
Of aspen tall. Th' uncurling floods, diffused
In glassy breath, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploing, eye
The falling verdure!"

All that follows is, you know, as good—better it cannot be—till we come to the close, the perfection of poetry, and then sally out into

the shower, and join the hymn of earth to heaven—

"The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard
By such as wander through the forest walks,
Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves.
But who can hold the shade, while heaven descends
In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap?
Swift Fancy fired anticipates their growth;
And, while the milky nutriment distils,
Beholds the kindling country colour round."

Thomson, they say, was too fond of epithets. Not he indeed. Strike out one of the many there—and your scone shall feel the crutch. A poet less conversant with nature would have feared to say, "sits on the horizon round a settled gloom," or rather, he would not have seen or thought it was a settled gloom; and, therefore, he could not have said—

—"But lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of Nature."

Leigh Hunt—most vivid of poets, and most cordial of critics—somewhere finely speaks of a ghastly line in a poem of Keates—

"Riding to Florence with the murder'd man;"

that is, the man about to be murdered—imagination conceiving as one, doom and death. Equally great are the words—

"Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploing, eye
The falling verdure."

The verdure is seen in the shower—to be the very shower—by the poet at least—perhaps by the cattle, in their thirsty hunger forgetful of the brown ground, and swallowing the dropping herbage. The birds had not been so sorely distressed by the drought as the beasts, and therefore the poet speaks of them, not as relieved from misery, but as visited with gladness—

"Hush'd in short suspense,
The plummy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,
And wait th' approaching sign, to strike, at once,
Into the general choir."

Then, and not till then, the humane poet thinks him of the insensate earth—insensate not; for beast and bird being satisfied, and lowing and singing in their gratitude, so do the places of their habitation yearn for the blessing—

"E'en mountains, vales,
And forests, seem, impatient, to demand
The promised sweetness."

The religious Poet then speaks for his kind—and says devoutly—

"Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude."

In that mood he is justified to feast his fancy with images of the beauty as well as the bounty of nature; and genius in one line has concentrated them all—

"Beholds the kindling country colour round."

'Tis "an a' day's rain"—and "the well-show-ered earth is deep-enriched with vegetable life." And what kind of an evening? We have seen many such—and every succeeding one more beautiful, more glorious to our eyes than another—because of these words in which the beauty and the glory of one and all are enshrined—

"Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
The rapid radiance, instantaneous, strikes
Th' illumined mountain, through the forest streams,
Shakes on the floods, and in a yellow mist,
Far smoking o'er th' interminable plain,
In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs around.
Full swell the woods; their every music wakes,
Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks
Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
Whence, blending all, the sweeten'd zephyr springs.
Meantime, refracted from yon eastern cloud,
Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
Shoots up immense; and every hue unfolds
In fair proportion, running from the red
To where the violet fades into the sky."

How do you like our recitation of that surpassing strain? Every shade of feeling should have its shade of sound—every pause its silence. But these must all come and go, untaught, unbidden, from the fulness of the heart. Then, indeed, and not till then, can words be said to be set to music—to a *celestial sing-song*.

The Mighty Minstrel recited old Ballads with a war-like march of sound that made one's heart leap, while his usually sweet smile was drawn in, and disappeared among the glooms that sternly gathered about his lowering brows and gave his whole aspect a most heroic character. Rude verses, that from ordinary lips would have been almost meaningless, from his came inspired with passion. Sir Philip Sidney, who said that Chevy Chase roused him like the sound of a trumpet, had he heard Sir Walter Scott recite it, would have gone distracted. Yet the "best judges" said he murdered his own poetry—we say about as much as Homer. Wordsworth recites his own Poetry (catch him reciting any other) magnificently—while his eyes seem blind to all outward objects, like those of a somnambulist. Coleridge was the sweetest of sing-singers—and his silver voice "warbled melody." Next to theirs, we believe our own recitation of Poetry to be the most impressive heard in modern times, though we cannot deny that the leathern-eared have pronounced it detestable, and the long-eared ludicrous; their delight being in what is called Elocution, as it is taught by player-folk.

Oh, friendly reader of these our Recreations! thou needst not to be told—yet in love let us tell thee—that there are a thousand ways of dealing in description with Nature, so as to make her poetical; but sentiment there always must be, else it is stark nought. You may infuse the sentiment by a single touch—by a ray of light no thicker, nor one thousandth part so thick, as the finest needle ever silk-threaded by lady's finger; or you may dance it in with a flutter of sunbeams; or you may splash it in as with a gorgeous cloud-stain stolen from sunset; or you may bathe it in with a shred of the rainbow. Perhaps the highest power of all possessed by the sons of song, is to breathe it in with the breath, to let it slip in with the light, of the common day!

Then some poets there are, who show you a scene all of a sudden, by means of a few magical words—just as if you opened your eyes at their bidding—and in place of a blank, a world. Others, again, as good and as great,

create their world gradually before your eyes, for the delight of your soul, that loves to gaze on the growing glory; but delight is lost in wonder, and you know that they, too, are warlocks. Some heap image upon image, piles of imagery on piles of imagery, as if they were ransacking and robbing and red-reaving earth, sea, and sky; yet all things there are consentaneous with one grand design, which, when consummated, is a Whole that seems to typify the universe. Others give you but fragments—but such as awaken imaginations of beauty and of power transcendent, like that famous Torso. And some show you Nature glimmering beneath a veil which, unlike, she has religiously taken; and then call not Nature ideal only in that holy twilight, for then it is that she is spiritual, and we who belong to her feel that we shall live for ever.

Thus—and in other wondrous ways—the great poets are the great painters, and so are they the great musicians. But how they are so, some other time may we tell; suffice it now to say, that as we listen to the mighty masters—"sole or responsive to each other's voice"—

"Now, 'tis like all instruments,
Now like a lonely lute;
And now 'tis like an angel's song
That bids the heavens be mute!"

Why will so many myriads of men and women, denied by nature "the vision and the faculty divine," persist in the delusion that they are poetizing, while they are but versifying "this bright and breathing world?" They see truly not even the outward objects of sight. But of all the rare affinities and relationships in Nature, visible or audible to Fine-ear-and-Far-eye the Poet, not a whisper—not a glimpse have they ever heard or seen, any more than had they been born deaf-blind.

They paint a landscape, but nothing "prates of their whereabouts," while they were sitting on a tripod, with their paper on their knees, drawing—their breath. For, in the front ground is a castle, against which, if you offer to stir a step, you infallibly break your head, unless providentially stopped by that extraordinary vegetable-looking substance, perhaps a tree, growing bolt upright out of an intermediate stone, that has wedged itself in long after there had ceased to be even standing-room in that strange theatre of nature. But down from "the swelling instep of a mountain's foot," that has protruded itself through a wood, while the body of the mountain prudently remains in the extreme distance, descends on you, ere you have recovered from your unexpected encounter with the old Roman cement, an unconscionable cataract. There stands a deer or goat, or rather some beast with horns, "strictly anonymous," placed for effect, contrary to all cause, in a place where it seems as uncertain how he got in as it is certain that he never can get out till he becomes a hippogriff.

The true poet, again, has such potent eyes, that when he lets down the lids, he sees just as well, perhaps better than when they were up; for in that deep, earnest, inward gaze, the fluctuating sea of scenery subsides into a

settled calm, where all is harmony as well as beauty—order as well as peace. What though he have been fated, through youth and manhood, to dwell in city smoke? His childhood—his boyhood—were overhung with trees, and through its heart went the murmur of waters. Then it is, we verily believe, that in all poets, is filled with images up to the brim, Imagination's treasury. Genius, growing, and grown up to maturity, is still a prodigal. But he draws on the Bank of Youth. His bills, whether at a short or long date, are never dishonoured; nay, made payable at sight, they are as good as gold. Nor cares that Bank for a run, made even in a panic, for besides bars and billets, and wedges and blocks of gold, there are, unappreciable beyond the riches which against a time of trouble

"The Sultaun hides in his ancestral tombs,"

jewels and diamonds sufficient

"To ransom great kings from captivity."

We sometimes think that the power of painting Nature to the life, whether in her real or ideal beauty, (both belonging to *life*), is seldom evolved to its utmost, until the mind possessing it is withdrawn in the body from all rural environment. It has not been so with Wordsworth, but it was so with Milton. The descriptive poetry in *Comus* is indeed rich as rich may be, but certainly not so great, perhaps not so beautiful, as that in *Paradise Lost*.

It would seem to be so with all of us, small as well as great; and were *we*—Christopher North—to compose a poem on Loch Skene, two thousand feet or so above the level of the sea, and some miles from a house, we should desire to do so in a metropolitan cellar. Desire springs from separation. The spirit seeks to unite itself to the beauty it loves, the grandeur it admires, the sublimity it almost fears; and all these being o'er the hills and far way, or on the hills cloud-hidden, why it—the spirit—makes itself wings—or rather wings grow up of themselves in its passion, and naturewards it flies like a dove or an eagle. People looking at us believe us present, but they never were so far mistaken in their lives; for in the Seamew are we sailing with the tide through the moonshine on Loch Etive—or hanging o'er the gulf of peril on the bosom of Skyroura.

We are sitting now in a dusky den—with our eyes shut—but we see the whole Highlands. Our Highland Mountains are of the best possible magnitude—ranging between two and four thousand feet high—and then in what multitudes! The more familiar you become with them, the mightier they appear—and you feel that it is all sheer folly to seek to dwindle or dwarf them, by comparing them as they rise before your eyes with your imagination of Mont Blanc and those eternal glaciers. If you can bring them under your command, you are indeed a sovereign—and have a noble set of subjects. In some weather they are of any height you choose to put upon them—say thirty thousand feet—in other states of the atmosphere you think you could walk over their summits and down into the region beyond in an hour. We have seen Cruachan, during

a whole black day, swollen into such enormous bulk, that Loch Awe looked like but a sullen river at its base, her woods bushes, and Kilchurn no bigger than a cottage. The whole visible scene was but he and his shadow. They seemed to make the day black, rather than the day to make them so—and at nightfall he took wider and loftier possession of the sky—the clouds congregated round without hiding his summit, on which seemed to twinkle, like earth-lighted fires, a few uncertain stars. Rain drives you into a shieling—and you sit there for an hour or two in eloquent confabulation with the herdsman, your English against his Gaelic. Out of the door you creep—and gaze in astonishment on a new world. The mist is slowly rolling up and away in long lines of clouds, preserving, perhaps, a beautiful regularity on their ascension and evanescence, and between them

"Tier above tier, a wooded theatre
Of stateliest view,"

or cliff-galleries with strange stone images sitting up aloft; and yet your eyes have not reached the summits, nor will they reach them, till all that vapoury ten-mile-long mass dissolve, or be scattered, and then you start to see them, as if therein had been but their bases, THE MOUNTAINS, with here and there a peak illumined, reposing in the blue serene that smiles as if all the while it had been above reach of the storm.

The power of Egoism accompanies us into solitude; nay, is even more life-pervading there than in the hum of men. There the stocks and stones are more impressive than those we sometimes stumble on in human society, and, moulded at our will, take what shape we choose to give them; the trees follow our footsteps, though our lips be mute, and we may have left at home our fiddle—more potent we in our actuality than the fabled Orpheus. Be hushed, ye streams, and listen unto Christopher! Be changed, ye clouds, and attentive unto North! And at our bidding silent the cataract on the cliff—the thunder on the sky. The sea beholds us on the shore—and his one huge frown transformed into a multitudinous smile, he turns flowing affections towards us along the golden sands—and in a fluctuating hindrance of lovely foam-wreaths envelopes our feet!

To return to Thomson. Wordsworth labours to prove, in one of his "postliminious prefaces," that the true spirit of the "Seasons," till long after their publication, was neither felt nor understood. In the conduct of his argument he does not shine. That the poem was at once admired he is forced to admit; but then, according to him, the admiration was false and hollow—it was regarded but with that wonder which is the "natural product of ignorance." After having observed that, excepting the "Nocturnal Reverie" of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the "Windsor Forest" of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the "Paradise Lost" and the "Seasons," does not contain a single new image of external nature, he proceeds to call the once well-known verses of Dryden in the "Indian Emperor," descriptive of the hush

of night, "vague, bombastic, and senseless," and Pope's celebrated translation of the moonlight scene in the "Iliad," altogether "absurd"—and then, without ever once dreaming of any necessity of showing them to be so, or even, if he had succeeded in doing so, of the utter illogicality of any argument drawn from their failure to establish the point he is hammering at, he all at once says, with the most astounding assumption, "*having shown* that much of what his [Thomson's] biographer deemed genuine admiration, must, in fact, have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?" "*Having shown*!" Why, he has shown nothing but his own arrogance in supposing that his mere *ipse dixit* will be taken by the whole world as proof that Dryden and Pope had not the use of their eyes. "Strange to think of an enthusiast," he says, (alluding to the passage in Pope's translation of the "Iliad,") "as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their *absurdity*!" We are no enthusiasts—we are far too old for that folly; but we have eyes in our head, though sometimes rather dim and motey, and as good eyes, too, as Mr. Wordsworth, and we often have recited—and hope often will recite them again—Pope's exquisite lines, not only without any "suspicion of their absurdity," but with the conviction of a most devout belief that, with some little vagueness perhaps, and repetition, and a word here and there that might be altered for the better, the description is most beautiful. But grant it miserable—grant all Mr. Wordsworth has so dictatorially uttered—and what then? Though descriptive poetry did not flourish during the period between "Paradise Lost" and the "Seasons," nevertheless, did not mankind enjoy the use of their seven senses? Could they not see and hear without the aid of those oculists and aurists, the poets? Were all the shepherds and agriculturists of England and Scotland blind and deaf to all the sights and sounds of nature, and all the gentlemen and ladies too, from the king and queen upon the throne, to the lowest of their subjects? Very like a whale! Causes there were why poetry flowed during that era in another channel than that of the description of natural scenery; and if it flowed too little in that channel then—which is true—equally is it true that it flows now in it too much—especially among the poets of the Lake School, to the neglect, not of sentiments and affections—for there they excel—but of strong direct human passion applied to the stir and tumult—of which the interest is profound and eternal—of all the great affairs of human life. But though the descriptive poets during the period between Milton and Thomson were few and indifferent, no reason is there in this world for imagining, with Mr. Wordsworth, that men had forgotten both the heavens and the earth. They had not—nor was the wonder with which they must have regarded the great shows of nature, the "natural product of ignorance," then, any more than it is now, or ever was during a civilized age. If we be right in saying so—

then neither could the admiration which the "Seasons," on the first appearance of that glorious poem, excited, be said, with any truth, to have been but a "wonder, the natural product of ignorance."

Mr. Wordsworth having thus signally failed in his attempt to show that "much of what Thomson's biographer deemed genuine admiration, must, in fact, have been blind wonderment," let us accompany him in his equally futile efforts to show "how the rest is to be accounted for." He attempts to do so after this fashion:—"Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one; in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental commonplaces, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the 'Seasons,' the book generally opens of itself with the Rhapsody on Love, or with one of the stories, perhaps of Damon and Musidora. These also are prominent in our Collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice."

Thomson, in one sense, *was fortunate* in the title of his poem. But a great poet like Wordsworth might—nay, ought to have chosen another word—or have given of that word a loftier explanation, when applied to Thomson's choice of the Seasons for the subject of his immortal poem. Genius made that choice—not fortune. The "Seasons" are not merely the "*title*" of his poem—they are his poem, and his poem is the Seasons. But how, pray, can Thomson be said to have been *fortunate* in the title or the subject either of his poem, in the sense that Mr. Wordsworth means? Why, according to him, people knew little, and cared less, about the Seasons. "The art of seeing had in some measure been learned!" That he allows—but that was all—and that all is but little—and surely far from being enough to have disposed people in general to listen to the strains of a poet who painted nature in all her moods, and under all her aspects. Thomson, then, we say, was either most *unfortunate* in the title of his poem, or there was not with the many that indifference to, and ignorance of natural scenery, on which Mr. Wordsworth so strenuously insists as part, or rather whole, of his preceding argument.

The title, Mr. Wordsworth says, seemed "to bring the poem home to the *prepared sympathies* of every one!" What! to the prepared sympathies of those who had merely, in some measure, learned the "art of seeing," and who had "paid," as he says in another sentence, "little accurate attention to the appearance of nature!" Never did the weakest mind ever fall into grosser contradictions than does here one of the strongest, in vainly labouring to bolster up a silly assertion, which he has separately ventured on from a most mistaken conceit that it was necessary to account for the

kind of reception which his own poetry had met with from the present age. The truth is, that had Mr. Wordsworth known, when he indited these luckless and helpless sentences, that his own poetry was, in the best sense of the word, a thousand times more popular than he supposed it to be—and, Heaven be praised, for the honour of the age, it was and is so!—never had they been written, nor had he here and elsewhere laboured to prove, that in proportion as poetry is bad, or rather as it is no poetry at all, is it, has been, and always will be, more and more popular in the age contemporary with the writer. That Thomson, in the *Seasons*, sometimes writes a *vicious style*, may be true, but it is not true that he often does so. His style has its faults, no doubt, and some of them inextricably interwoven with the web of his composition. It is a dangerous style to imitate—especially to dunces. But its *virtue is divine*; and that *divine virtue*, even in this low world of ours, wins admiration more surely and widely than *earthly vice*—be it in words, thoughts, feelings, or actions—is a creed that we will not relinquish at the beck or bidding even of the great author of the “Excursion.”

That many did—do—and will admire the bad or indifferent passages in the *Seasons*—won by their false glitter or commonplace sentimentalism, is no doubt true: but the delight, though as intense as perhaps it may be foolish, with which boys and virgins, woman-mantua-makers and man-milliners, and “the rest,” peruse the *Rhapsody on Love*—one passage of which we ventured to be facetious on in our *Soliloquy on the Seasons*—and hang over the picture of Musidora undressing, while Damon watches the process of disrobing, panting behind a tree, will never account for the admiration with which the whole world hailed the “Winter,” the first published of the “*Seasons*,” during which, Thomson had not the barbarity to plunge any young lady naked into the cold bath, nor the ignorance to represent, during such cold weather, any young lady turning her lover sick by the ardour of her looks, and the vehemence of her whole enamoured deportment. The time never was—nor could have been—when such passages were generally esteemed the glory of the poem. Indeed, independently of its own gross absurdity, the assertion is at total variance with that other assertion, equally absurd, that people admired most in the poem what they least understood; for the *Rhapsody on Love* is certainly very intelligible, nor does there seem much mystery in Musidora going into the water to wash and cool herself on a hot day. Is it not melancholy, then, to hear such a man as Mr. Wordsworth, earnestly, and even somewhat angrily, trying to prove that “these are the parts of the work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice?”

With respect to the “sentimental commonplaces with which Thomson abounds,” no doubt they were and are popular; and many of them deserve to be so, for they are on a level with the usual current of human feeling, and many of them are eminently beautiful.

Thomson had not the philosophical genius of Wordsworth, but he had a warm human heart, and its generous feelings overflow all his poem. These are not the most poetical parts of the “*Seasons*” certainly, where such effusions prevail; but still, so far from being either *vicious* or *worthless*, they have often a virtue and a worth that must be felt by all the children of men. There is something not very credible in the situation of the parties in the story of the “lovely young Lavinia,” for example, and much of the sentiment is commonplace enough; but will Mr. Wordsworth say—in support of his theory, that the worst poetry is always at first (and at last too, it would seem, from the pleasure with which that tale is still read by all simple minds) the most popular—that that story is a bad one? It is a very beautiful one.

Mr. Wordsworth, in all his argumentation, is so blinded by his determination to see every thing in but one light, and that a most mistaken one, that he is insensible to the conclusion to which it all leads, or rather, which is involved in it. Why, according to him, *even now*, when people have not only learned the “art of seeing”—a blessing for which they can never be too thankful—but when descriptive poetry has long flourished far beyond its palmiest state in any other era of our literature, still are we poor common mortals who admire the “*Seasons*,” just as deaf and blind now, or nearly so, to their real merits—allowed to be transcendent—as our unhappy forefathers were when that poem first appeared, “a glorious apparition.” The *Rhapsody on Love*, and Damon and Musidora, are still, according to him, its chief attraction—its false ornaments—and its sentimental commonplaces—such as those, we presume, on the benefits of early rising, and,

“Oh! little think the gay licentious proud!”

What a nest of innies must people in general be in Mr. Wordsworth’s eyes! And is the “Excursion” now to be placed by the side of “Paradise Lost,” till the Millennium?

Such is the *reasoning* (!) of one of the first of our English poets, against not only the people of Britain, but mankind. One other sentence there is which we had forgotten—but now remember—which is to help us to distinguish, in the case of the reception the “*Seasons*” met with, between “wonder and legitimate admiration!” “The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year; and, undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a poet!” How original and profound! Thomson redeemed his pledge; and that great pawnbroker, the public, returned to him his poem at the end of a year and a day. Now what is the “mighty stream of tendency” of that remark? Were the public, or the people, or the world, gulled by this unheard-of pledge of Thomson, to regard his work with that “wonder which is the natural product of ignorance!” If they were so in his case, why not in every other? All poets pledge themselves to be poetical, but too many of them are wretchedly prosaic—die and are buried, or, what is worse, protract a miserable existence, in spite of their sentimental

commonplaces, false ornaments, and a vicious style. But Thomson, in spite of all these, leapt at once into a glorious life, and a still more glorious immortality.

There is no mystery in the matter. Thomson—a great poet—poured his genius over a subject of universal interest; and the “Seasons” from that hour to this—then, now, and for ever—have been, are, and will be loved, and admired by all the world. All over Scotland “The Seasons” is a household-book. Let the taste and feeling shown by the Collectors of *Elegant Extracts* be poor as possible; yet Thomson’s countrymen, high and low, rich and poor, have all along not only gloried in his illustrious fame, but have made a very manual of his great work. It lies in many thousand cottages. We have ourselves seen it in the shepherd’s shieling, and in the woodman’s bower—small, yellow-leaved, tatter’d, mean; miserable, calf-skin-bound, smoked, *stinking* copies—let us not fear to utter the word, ugly but true—yet perused, pored, and pondered over by those humble dwellers, by the winter ingle or on the summer brae, perhaps with as enlightened—certainly with as imagination-overmastering a delight as ever enchained the spirits of the high-born and highly-taught to their splendid copies lying on richly carved tables, and bound in crimson silk or velvet, in which the genius of painting strives to embody that of poetry, and the printer’s art to lends its beauty to the very shape of the words in which the bard’s immortal spirit is enshrined. “The art of seeing” has flourished for many centuries in Scotland. Men, women, and children,

all look up to her loveful blue or wrathful black skies, with a weather-wisdom that keeps growing from the cradle to the grave. Say not that ‘tis alone

“The poor Indian, whose untutor’d mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind!”

In scriptural language, loftier even than that, the same imagery is applied to the sights seen by the true believer. Who is it “that maketh the clouds his chariot?” The Scottish peasantry—Highland and Lowland—look much and often on nature thus; and they live in the heart of the knowledge and of the religion of nature. Therefore do they love Thomson as an inspired bard—only a little lower than the Prophets. In like manner have the people of Scotland—from time immemorial—enjoyed the use of their ears. Even persons somewhat hard of hearing, are not deaf to her waterfalls. In the sublime invocation to Winter, which we have quoted—we hear Thomson recording his own worship of nature in his boyish days, when he roamed among the hills of his father’s parish, far away from the manse. In those strange and stormy delights did not thousands of thousands of the Scottish boyhood familiarly live among the mists and snows? Of all that number he alone had the genius to “here eternize on earth” his joy—but many millions have had souls to join religiously in the hymns he chanted. Yea, his native land, with one mighty voice, has for upwards of a century responded,

“These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God!”

THE SNOWBALL BICKER OF PEDMOUNT.

BEAUTIFUL as Snow yet is to our eyes, even through our spectacles, how gray it looks beside that which used to come with the long winters that glorified the earth in our youth, till the white lustre was more delightful even than the green—and we prayed that the fine fleecy flakes might never cease falling waveringly from the veil of the sky! No sooner comes the winter now, than it is away again to one of the Poles. Then, it was a year in itself—a whole life. We remember slides a quarter of a mile long, on level meadows; and some not less steep, down the sides of hills that to us were mountains. No boy can slide on one leg now—not a single shoe seems to have sparables. The florid style of skating shows that that fine art is degenerating; and we look in vain for the grand simplicity of the masters that spread-eagled in the age of its perfection. A change has come over the spirit of the curlers’ dream. They seem to our ears indeed to have “quat their roaring play.” The cry of “swoop-swoop” is heard still—but a faint, feeble, and unimpassioned cry, compared with that which used, on the Mearns Brother-Loch, to make the welkin ring, and for a moment to

startle the moon and stars—those in the sky, as well as those below the ice—till again the tumult subsided—and all the host of heaven above and beneath became serene as a world of dreams. Is it not even so, Shepherd? What is a rink now on a pond in Duddingstone policy, to the rinks that rang and roared of old on the Loch o’ the Lowes, when every stone, circled in a halo of spray, seemed instinct with spirit to obey, along all its flight, the voice of him that launched it on its unerring aim, and sometimes, in spite of his awkward skilllessness, when the fate of the game hung on his own single crank, went cannonading through all obstacles, till it fell asleep, like a beauty as it was, just as it kissed the Tee!

Again we see—again we sit in the Snow house, built by us boys out of a drift in the minister’s glebe, a drift—judging by the steeple, which was sixty—about twenty feet high—and purer than any marble. The roof was all strewn with diamonds, which frost saved from the sun. The porch of the palace was pillared—and the character of the building outside was, without any servile imitation—for we worked in the glow of original genius, and

none of us had then ever seen itself or its picture—wonderfully like the Parthenon. Entering, you found yourself in a superb hall, lighted up—not with gas, for up to that era gas had not been used except in Pandemonium—but with a vast multitude of farthing candles, each in a turnip stuck into the wall—while a chandelier of frozen snow-branches pendent from the roof set that presence-chamber in a blaze. On a throne at the upper end sat young Christopher North—then the king of boys, as now of men—and proud were his subjects to do him homage. In niches all around the side-walls were couches covered with hare, rabbit, founmart, and fox's skins—furnished by these animals slain by us in the woods and among the rocks of that silvan and moorland parish—the regal *Torus* alone being spread with the dun-deer's hide from *Lochiel Forest* in *Lochaber*. Then old airs were sung—in sweet single voice—or in full chorus that startled the wandering night traveller on his way to the lone *Kingswell*; and then, in the intermediate hush, old tales were told “of goblin, ghost, or fairy,” or of *Wallace Wight* at the *Barns of Ayr* or the *Brigg o' Stirling*—or, a glorious outlaw, harbouring in caves among the *Cartlane Craigs*—or of *Robert Bruce the Deliverer*, on his shelly cleaving in twain the skull of *Bohun* the English knight, on his thundering war-steed, armed cap-a-pie, while the King of Scotland had nothing on his unconquered head but his plain golden crown. Tales of the *Snow-house*! Had we but the genius to recall you to life in undying song!

Nor was our frozen hall at all times uncheered by the smiles of beauty. With those smiles was heard the harmless love-whisper, and the harmless kisses of love; for the cottages poured forth their littlelasses in flower-like bands, nor did their parents fear to trust them in the fairy frozen palace, where Christopher was king. Sometimes the old people themselves came to see the wonders of the lamp, and on a snow-table stood a huge bowl—not of snow—steaming with nectar that made *Hyems* smile as he hung his beard over the fragrant vapour. Nay, the minister himself—with his mother and sister—was with us in our fantastic festivities, and gave to the architecture of our palace his wondering praise. Then *Andrew Lindsey*, the blind *Paisley* musician, a Latin scholar, who knew where *Cremona* stood, struck up on his famous fiddle jig or strathspey—and the swept floor, in a moment, was alive with a confused flight of foursome reels, each begun and ended with kisses, and maddened by many a whoop and yell—so like savages were we in our glee, dancing at the marriage of some island king!

Countless years have fled since that *Snow-palace* melted away—and of all who danced there, how many are now alive! Pshaw! as many probably as then danced anywhere else. It would never do to live for ever—let us then live well and wisely; and when death comes—from that sleep how blessed to awake! in a region where is no frost—no snow—but the sun of eternal life!

Mercy on us! what a hubbub!—can the harriers be hunting in such a snow-fall as this,

and is poor pussy in view before the whole murderous pack, opening in full cry on her haunches? Why—Imagination, thou art an ass, and thy long ears at all times greedy of deception! 'Tis but the country Schoolhouse pouring forth its long-imprisoned stream of life as in a sudden sunny thaw, the Mad Master flying in the van of his helter-skelter scholars, and the whole yelling mass precipitated, many of them headlong, among the snow. Well do we know the fire-eyed Poet-pedagogue, who, more outrageous than *Apollo*, has “ravished all the Nine.” Ode, elegy, epic, tragedy, or farce—all come alike to him; and of all the bards we have ever known—and the sum-total cannot be under a thousand—he alone, judging from the cock and the squint of his eye, labours under the blessing or the curse—we wot not which it be—of perpetual inspiration. A rare eye, too, is his at the setting of a spring for woodcocks, or tracking a mawkin on the snow. Not a daredevil in the school that durst follow the indentations of his toes and fingers up the wall of the old castle, to the holes just below the battlements, to thrust his arm up to the elbows harrying the starlings' nests. The corbies ken the shape of his shoulders, as craftily he threads the wood; and let them build their domicile as high as the swinging twigs will bear its weight, agile as squirrel, and as founmart ferocious, up speeds, by the height undizzied, the dreadless *Dominie*; and should there be fledged or puddock-haired young ones among the wool, whirling with guttural cawings down a hundred feet descent, on the hard rooty ground-floor from which springs pine, oak, or ash, driven out is the life, with a squelsh and a squash, from the worthless carrion. At swimming we should not boggle to back him for the trifle of a cool hundred against the best survivor among these water-serpents, *Mr. Turner*, *Dr. Bedale*, *Lieutenant Ekenhead*, *Lord Byron*, *Leander*, and *Ourselves*—while, with the steel shiners on his soles, into what a set of ninnies in their ring would he not reduce the *Edinburgh Skating Club*?

Saw ye ever a *Snowball Bicker*? Never! Then look there with all the eyes in your head—only beware of a bash on the bridge of your nose, a bash that shall die the snow with your virgin blood. The Poet-pedagogue, *alias* the Mad *Dominie*, with *Bob Howie* as his Second in Command, has chosen the Six stoutest striplings for his troop, and, at the head of that Sacred Band, offers battle to Us at the head of the whole School. Nor does that formidable force decline the combat. War levels all foolish distinctions of scholarship. Booby is Dux now, and Dux Booby—and the obscure dunce is changed into an illustrious hero.

“The combat deepens—on, ye brave,
Who rush to glory or the grave!
Wave, Nitton, all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy schoolery!”

Down from the mount on which it had been drawn up in battle-array, in solid-square comes the School army, with shouts that might waken the dead, and inspire with the breath of life the nostrils of the great *Snow-giant* built up at the end of yonder avenue, and indurated by

last night's frost. But there lies a fresh fall—and a better day for a Bicker never rose flakily from the yellow East. Far out of distance, and prodigal of powder lying three feet deep on the flats, and heaped up in drifts to tree and chimney-top, the tirailleurs, flung out in front, commence the conflict by a shower of balls that, from the bosom of the yet untrodden snow between the two battles, makes spin like spray the shining surface. Then falling back on the main body, they find their places in the front rank, and the whole mottled mass, gray, blue, and scarlet, moves onwards o'er the whiteness, a moment ere they close,

"Calm as the breeze, but dreadful as the storm!"

"Let fly," cries a clear voice—and the snow-ball-storm hurtles through the sky. Just then the valley-mouth blew sleety in the faces of the foe—their eyes, as if darkened with snuff or salt, blinked bat-like—and with erring aim flew their feckless return to that shower of frosty fire. Incessant is the silent cannonade of the resistless School—silent but when shouts proclaim the fall or flight of some doughty champion in the adverse legion.

See—see—the Sacred Band are broken! The cravens taken ignominiously to flight—and the Mad Domine and Bob Howie alone are left to bear the brunt of battle. A dreadful brotherhood! But the bashing balls are showered upon them right and left from scores of catapultic arms—and the day is going sore against them, though they fight less like men than devils. Hurra! the Dominie's down, and Bob staggers. "Guards, up and at them!" "A simultaneous charge of cocks, hens, and yearocks!" No sooner said than done. Bob Howie is buried—and the whole School is trampling on its Master!

"Oh, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!"

The smothered ban of Bob, and the stifled denunciations of the Dominie, have echoed o'er the hill, and,

"Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,"

the runaways, shaking the snows of panic from their paws,

"Like dewdrops from the lion's mane,"

come rushing to the rescue. Two of the Six tremble and turn. The high heroic scorn of their former selves urges four to renew the charge, and the sound of their feet on the snow is like that of an earthquake. What bashes on bloody noses! What bungings-up of eyes! Of lips what slittings! Red is many a spittle! And as the coughing urchin groans, and claps his hand to his mouth, distained is the snowball that drops unlaunched at his feet! The School are broken—their hearts die within them—and—can we trust our blasted eyes?—the white livers show the white feather, and fly! O shame! O sorrow! O sin! they turn their backs and fly! Disgraced are the mothers that bore them—and "happy in my mind," wives and widows, "were ye that died," undoomed to hear the tidings of this wretched

overthrow! Heavens and earth! sixty are flying before Six!—and half of sixty—oh! that we should record it!—*are pretending to be dead!!* Would indeed that the snow were their winding-sheet, so that it might but hide our dishonour!

Look, we beseech you, at the Mad Dominie! like Hector issuing from the gates of Troy, and driving back the Greeks to their ships; or rather—hear, spirit of Homer!—like some great shaggy, outlandish wolf-dog, that hath swum ashore from some strange wreck, and, after a fortnight's famine on the bare sea-cliffs, been driven by the hunger that gnaws his stomach like a cancer, and the thirst-ferver that can only be slaked in blood, to venture prowling for prey up the vale, till, snuffing the scent of a flock of sheep, after some grim tiger-like creeping on his belly, he springs at last, with huge long spangs, on the woolly people, with bull-like growlings quailing their poor harmless hearts, and then fast throttling them, one after another—till, as it might seem rather in wantonness of rage than in empty pangs, he lies down at last in the midst of all the murdered carcasses, licking the blood off his flews and paws—and then, looking and listening round with his red turbid eyes, and sharp-pointed ears savagely erect, conscious of crime and fearful of punishment, soon as he sees and hears that all the coast is clear and still, again gloatingly fastens his tusks behind the ears, and then eats into the kidneys of the fattest of the flock, till, sated with gore and tallow, he sneaks stealthily into the wood, and coiling himself up all his wiry length—now no longer lank, but swollen and knotted like that of a deer-devouring snake—he falls suddenly asleep, and re-banquets in a dream of murder.

That simile was conceived in the spirit of Dan Homer, but delivered in that of Kit North. No matter. Like two such wolf-dogs are now Bob Howie and the Mad Dominie—and the School like such silly sheep. Those other hell-dogs are leaping in the rear—and to the eyes of fear and flight each one of the Six seems more many-headed than Cerberus, while their mouths kindle the frosty air into fire, and thunderbolts pursue the pell-mell of the panic.

Such and so imaginative is not only mental but corporal fear. What though it be but a Snowball bicker! The air is darkened—no brightened by the balls, as in many a curve they describe their airy flight—some hard as stones—some soft as slush—some blae and drippy in the cold-hot hand that launches them on the flying foe, and these are the teasers—some almost transparent in the cerulean sky, and broken ere they reach their aim, abortive "armamentaria celi"—and some useless from the first, and felt, as they leave the palm, to be fozier than the foziest turnip, and unfit to bash a fly.

Far and wide, over hill, bank, and brae, are spread the flying School! Squads of us, at sore sizes and sevens, are making for the frozen woods. Alas! poor covert now in their naked leaflessness for the stricken deer! Twos and threes, in miserable plight floundering in drift-wreaths! And here and there—wofulesst

sight of all—single boys distractedly etting at the sanctuaries of distant houses—with their heads all the while insanely twisted back over their shoulders, and the glare of their eyes fixed frightfully on the swift-footed Mad Dominie, till souse over neck and ears, bubble and squeak, precipitated into traitorous pitfall, and in a moment vanished from this upper world!

Disturbed crows fly away a short distance and alight silent—the magpies chatter pert even in alarm—the lean kine, collected on the lown sides of braes, wonder at the rippet—their horns moving, but not their tails—while the tempest-tamed bull—almost dull now as an ox—gives a short sullen growl as he feebly paws the snow.

But who is he—the tall slender boy—slender, but sinewy—a wiry chap—five feet eight on his stocking-soles—and on his stocking-soles he stands—for the snow has sucked his shoes from his feet—that plants himself like an oak sapling, rooted ankle-deep on a knoll, and there, a juvenile Juppiter Stator, with voice and arm arrests the Flight, and fiercely gesticulating vengeance on the insolent foe, recalls and rallies the shattered School, that he may read them to victory? The phantom of a visionary dream! KIT NORTH HIMSELF—

"In life's morning march when his spirit was young."
And once on a day was that figure—ours!
Then like a chamois-hunter of the Alps! Now,
alas! like—

"But be hush'd, my dark spirit—for wisdom condemns,
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as a rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore.
Through the perils of chance and the scowl of disdain,
Let thy front be unalter'd, thy courage elate;
Yea! even the name we have worshipp'd in vain
Shall awake not a pang of remembrance again;
To bear, is to conquer our fate!"

Half a century is annihilated as if it had never been: it is as if young Kit had become not old Kit—but were standing now as then front to front, with but a rood of trampled snow between them, before the Mad Dominie and Bob Howie—both the bravest of the brave in Snowball or Stone bicker—in street, lane, or muir fight—hand to hand, single-pitched with Black King Carey of the Gipsies—or in irregular high-road row—two to twelve—with a gang of Irish horse-cowpers from the fair of Glasgow returning by Portpatrick to Donaghadee. 'Tis a strange thing so distinctly to see One's Self as he looked of yore—to lose one's present frail personal identity in that of the powerful past. Or rather to admire One's Self as he was, without consciousness of the mean vice of egotism, because of the pity almost bordering on contempt with which One regards One's Self as he is, shrivelled up into a sort of shrimp of a man—or blown out into a flounder.

The Snowball bicker owns an armistice—and Kit North—that is, we of the olden and the golden time—advance into the debatable ground between the two armies, with a frozen branch in our hand as a flag of truce. The Mad Dominie loved us, because then-a-days—bating and barring the cock and the squint of his eye—we were like himself a poet, and while a goose might continue standing on one leg, could have composed one jolly act of a tragedy, or book of an epic, while Bob—God

bless him!—to guard us from scathe, would have risked his life against a whole crael of tinkers. With open arms they come forward to receive us; but our blood is up—and we are jealous of the honour of the School, which has received a stain which must be wiped out in blood. From what mixed motives act boys and men in the deeds deemed most heroic, and worthy of the meed of everlasting fame! Even so is it now with us—when sternly eyeing the other Six, and then respectfully the Mad Dominie, we challenge—not at long bowls—but toe to toe, at the scratch on the snow, with the naked mawlies, the brawny boy with the red shock-head, the villain with the carrots, who by moonlight nights,

"Round the stacks with the lasses at bogles to play,"
had dared to stand between us and the lady of our love. Off fly our jackets and stocks—it is not a day for buff—and at it like bull-dogs. Twice before had we fought him—at our own option—over the bonnet; for 'twas a sturdy villain, and famous for the cross-buttock. But now, after the first close, in which we lose the fall—with straight right-handers we keep him at off-fighting—and that was a gush of blood from his smeller. "How do you like that, Ben?" Giving his head, with a mad rush, he makes a plunge with his heavy left—for he was kerr-handed—at our stomach. But a dip of our right elbow caught the blow, to the loud admiration of Bob Howie—and even the Mad Dominie, the umpire, could not choose but smile. Like lightning, our left returns between the ogles—and Ben bites the snow. Three cheers from the School—and, lifted on the knee of his second, James Maxwell Wallace, since signalized at Waterloo, and now a knighted colonel of horse, "he grins horribly a ghastly smile," and is brought up staggering to the scratch. We know that we have him—and ask considerately, "what he means by winking?" And now we play around him,

"Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild-geese at play."

He is brought down now to our own weight—then nine stone jump—his eyes are getting momentarily more and more piglike—water-logged, like those of Queen Bleary, whose stone image lies in the echoing aisle of the old abbey-church of Paisley—and bat-blind, he hits past our head and body, like an awkward hand at the flail, when drunk, thrashing corn. Another hit on the smeller, and a stinger on the throat-apple—and down he sinks like a poppy—deaf to the call of "time"—and victory smiles upon us from the bright blue skies. "Hurra—hurra—hurra! Christopher for ever!" and perched aloft, astride on the shoulders of Bob Howie—he, the Invincible, gallops with us all over the field, followed by the shouting School, exulting that Ben the Bully has at last met with an overthrow. We exact an oath that he will never again meddle with Meg Whitelaw—shake hands cordially, and

"Off to some other game we all together flew."
And so ended the famous Snowball Bicker of Pedmount, now immortalized in our Prose Poem.

Some men, it is sarcastically said, are boys all life-long, and carry with them their puer-

ility to the grave. 'Twould be well for the world were there in it more such men. By way of proving their manhood, we have heard grown-up people abuse their own boyhood—forgetting what our great Philosophical Poet—after Milton and Dryden—has told them, that

“The boy is father of the man,”

and thus libelling the author of their existence. A poor boy indeed must he have been, who submitted to misery when the sun was new in heaven. Did he hate or despise the flowers around his feet, congratulating him on being young like themselves? the stars, young always, though Heaven only knows how many million years old, every night sparkling in happiness which they manifestly wished him to share! Did he indeed in his heart believe that the moon, in spite of her shining midnight face, was made of green cheese? Not only are the foundations dug and laid in boyhood, of all the knowledge and the feelings of our prime, but the ground-flat too built, and often the second story of the entire superstructure, from the windows of which, the soul looking out, beholds nature in her state, and leaps down, unafraid of a fall on the green or white bosom of earth, to join with hymns the front of the procession. The soul afterwards perfects her palace—building up tier after tier of

all imaginable orders of architecture—till the shadowy roof, gleaming with golden cupolas, like the cloud-region of the setting sun, set the heavens a-blaze.

Gaze up on the highest idea—gaze down on the profoundest emotion—and you will know and feel in a moment that it is not a new birth. You become a devout believer in the Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine of metempsychosis and reminiscence, and are awed by the mysterious consciousness of the thought “BEFORE!” Try then to fix its date, and back travels your soul, now groping its way in utter darkness, and now in darkness visible—now launching along lines of steady lustre: such as the moon throws on the broad bosoms of starry lakes—now dazzled by sudden contrast—

“Blind with excess of light!”

But back let it travel, as best or worst it may, through and amidst eras after eras of the wan or radiant past; yet never, except for some sweet instant of delusion, breaking dewdrop-like at a touch or a breath, during all that perilous pilgrimage—and perilous must it be, haunted by so many ghosts—never may it reach the shrine it seeks—the fountain from which first flowed that feeling whose origin seems to have been out of the world of time—dare we say—in eternity!

CHRISTMAS DREAMS.

How graciously provided are all the subdivisions of Time, diversifying the dream of human life! And why should moralists mourn over the mutability that gives the chief charm to all that passes so transitorily before our eyes!—leaving image upon image in the waters of memory, that can bear being stirred without being disturbed, and contain steadier and steadier reflections as they seem to repose on an unfathomable depth!—the years, the months, the weeks, the days, the nights, the hours, the minutes, the moments, each in itself a different living, and peopled, and haunted world. One Life is a thousand lives, and each individual, as he fully renews the past, reappears in a thousand characters; yet all of them bearing a mysterious identity not to be misunderstood, and all of them, while every passion has been shifting and ceasing, and reascending into power, still under the dominion of the same Conscience, that feels and knows it is from God.

Who will complain of the shortness of human life, that can re-travel all the windings, and wanderings, and mazes that his feet have trodden since the farthest back hour at which memory pauses, baffled and blindfolded, as she vainly tries to penetrate and illumine the palpable, the impervious darkness that shrouds the few first years of our inscrutable being? Long, long, long ago seems it to be indeed, when we now remember it, the Time we first

pulled the primroses on the sunny braes, wondering in our first blissful emotions of beauty at the leaves with a softness all their own—a yellowness nowhere else so vivid—“the bright consummate flower” so starlike to our awakened imagination among the lowly grass—lovely indeed to our admiring eyes as any one of all the stars that, in their turn, did seem themselves like flowers in the blue fields of heaven! Long, long, long ago, the time when we danced hand in hand with our golden-haired sister! Long, long, long ago, the day on which she died—the hour, so far more dismal than any hour that can now darken us on this earth, when her coffin descended slowly, slowly into the horrid clay, and we were borne deathlike, and wishing to die, out of the churchyard, that, from that moment, we thought we could enter never more! What a multitudinous being must ours have been, when, before our boyhood was gone, we could have forgotten her buried face! Or at the dream of it, dashed off a tear, and away, with a bounding heart, in the midst of a cloud of playmates, breaking into fragments on the hill-side, and hurrying round the shores of those wild moorland lochs, in vain hope to surprise the heron that slowly uplifted his blue bulk, and floated away, regardless of our shouts, to the old cattle woods. It is all like a reminiscence of some other state of existence.

Then, after all the joys and sorrows of those

few years, which we now call transitory, but which our *BOYHOOD* felt as if they would be endless—as if they would endure for ever—arose upon us the glorious dawning of another new life—*YOUTH*—with its insupportable sunshine, and its agitating storms. Transitory, too, we now know, and well deserving the same name of dream. But while it lasted, long, various, and agonizing; as, unable to sustain the eyes that first revealed to us the light of love, we hurried away from the parting hour, and, looking up to moon and stars, invoked in sacred oaths, hugged the very heavens to our heart. Yet life had not then nearly reached its meridian, journeying up the sunbright firmament. How low hung it there exulting, when “it flamed on the forehead of the noontide sky!” Let not the Time be computed by the lights and shadows of the years, but by the innumerable array of visionary thoughts, that kept deploying as if from one eternity into another—now in dark sullen masses, now in long array, brightened as if with spear-points and standards, and moving along through chasm, abyss, and forest, and over the summits of the highest mountains, to the sound of ethereal music, now warlike and tempestuous—now, as “from flutes and soft recorders” accompanying not pæans of victory but hymns of peace. That Life, too, seems, now that it is gone, to have been of a thousand years. Is it gone? Its skirts are yet hovering on the horizon. And is there yet another Life destined for us? That Life which men fear to face—Age, Old Age! Four dreams within a dream—and *where* to awake?

At dead of night—and it is now dead of night—how the heart quakes on a sudden at the silent resurrection of buried thoughts! Perhaps the sunshine of some one single Sabbath of more exceeding holiness comes first glimmering, and then brightening upon us, with the very same sanctity that filled all the air at the tolling of the kirk-bell, when all the parish was hushed, and the voice of streams heard more distinctly among the banks and braes. Then, all at once, a thunder-storm that many years before, or many years after, drove us, when walking alone over the mountains, into a shieling, will seem to succeed; and we behold the same threatening aspect of the heavens that then quailed our beating hearts, and frowned down our eyelids before the lightning began to flash, and the black rain to deluge all the glens. No need now for any effort of thought. The images rise of themselves—independently of our volition—as if another being, studying the working of our minds, conjured up the phantasmagoria before us who are beholding it with love, wonder, and fear. Darkness and silence have a power of sorcery over the past; the soul has then, too, often restored to it feelings and thoughts that it had lost, and is made to know that nothing it once experiences ever perishes, but that all things spiritual possess a principle of immortal life.

Why linger on the shadowy wall some of ‘nose phantasmagoria’—returning after they have disappeared—and reluctant to pass away into their former oblivion? Why shoot others

athwart the gloom, quick as spectral figures seen hurrying among the mountains during a great storm? Why do some glare and threaten—why others fade away with a melancholy smile? Why *that one*—a Figure all in white, and with white roses in her hair—come forward through the haze, beautifying into distinct form and face, till her pale beseeching hands almost touch our neck—and then, in a moment, it is as nothing?

But now the room is disenchanted—and feebly our lamp is glimmering, about to leave us to the light of the moon and stars. There it is trimmed again—and the sudden increase of lustre cheers the heart within us like a festal strain. And *To-Morrow*—*To-Morrow* is Merry Christmas; and when its night descends there will be mirth and music, and the light sounds of the merry-twinkling feet within these now so melancholy walls—and sleep now reigning over all the house save this one room, will be banished far over the sea—and morning will be reluctant to allow her light to break up the innocent orgies.

Were every Christmas of which we have been present at the celebration, painted according to nature—what a Gallery of Pictures! True that a sameness would pervade them all—but only that kind of sameness that pervades the nocturnal heavens. One clear night always is, to common eyes, just like another; for what hath any night to show but one moon and some stars—a blue vault, with here a few braided, and there a few castellated, clouds? yet no two nights ever bore more than a family resemblance to each other before the studious and instructed eye of him who has long communed with Nature, and is familiar with every smile and frown on her changeful, but not capricious, countenance. Even so with the Annual Festivals of the heart. Then our thoughts are the stars that illumine those skies—and on ourselves it depends whether they shall be black as Erebus, or brighter than Aurora.

“Thoughts! that like spirits trackless come and go!”—

is a fine line of Charles Lloyd’s. But no bird skims, no arrow pierces the air, without producing some change in the Universe, which will last to the day of doom. No coming and going is absolutely trackless; nor irrecoverable by Nature’s law is any consciousness, however ghostlike; though many one, even the most blissful, never does return, but seems to be buried among the dead. But they are not dead—but only sleep; though to us who recall them not, they are as they had never been, and we, wretched ingrates, let them lie for ever in oblivion! How passing sweet when of their own accord they arise to greet us in our solitude!—as a friend who, having sailed away to a foreign land in our youth, has been thought to have died many long years ago, may suddenly stand before us, with face still familiar and name reviving in a moment, and all that he once was to us brought from utter forgetfulness close upon our heart.

My Father’s House! How it is ringing like a grove in spring, with the din of creatures happier, a thousand times happier, than

all the birds on earth. It is the Christmas Holidays—Christmas Day itself—Christmas Night—and Joy in every bosom intensifies Love. Never before were we brothers and sisters so dear to one another—never before had our hearts so yearned towards the authors of our being—our blissful being! There they sit—silent in all that outcry—composed in all that disarray—still in all that tumult; yet, as one or other flying imp sweeps round the chair, a father's hand will playfully strive to catch a prisoner—a mother's gentler touch on some sylph's disordered symar be felt almost as a reproof, and for a moment slacken the fairy-flight. One old game treads on the heels of another—twenty within the hour—and many a new game never heard of before nor since, struck out by the collision of kindred spirits in their glee, the transitory fancies of genius inventive through very delight. Then, all at once, there is a hush, profound as ever falls on some little plat within a forest when the moon drops behind the mountain, and small green-robed People of Peace at once cease their pastime, and vanish. For she—the Silver-Tongued—is about to sing an old ballad, words and air alike hundreds of years old—and sing she doth, while tears begin to fall, with a voice too mournfully beautiful long to breathe below—and, ere another Christmas shall have come with the falling snows, doomed to be mute on earth—but to be hymning in Heaven.

Of that House—to our eyes the fairest of earthly dwellings—with its old ivied turrets, and orchard-garden bright alike with fruit and with flowers, not one stone remains. The very brook that washed its foundations has vanished along with them—and a crowd of other buildings, wholly without character, has long stood where here a single tree, and there a grove, did once render so lovely that small demesne; which, how could we, who thought it the very heart of Paradise, even for one moment have believed was one day to be blotted out of being, and we ourselves—then so linked in love that the band which bound us altogether was, in its gentle pressure, felt not nor understood—to be scattered far and abroad, like so many leaves that after one wild parting rustle are separated by roaring wind-eddies, and brought together no more! The old Abbey—it still survives; and there, in that corner of the burial-ground, below that part of the wall which was least in ruins, and which we often climbed to reach the flowers and nests—there, in hopes of a joyful resurrection, lie the Loved and Venerated—for whom, even now that so many grief-deadening years have fled, we feel, in this holy hour, as if it were impiety so utterly to have ceased to weep—so seldom to have remembered!—And then, with a powerlessness of sympathy to keep pace with youth's frantic grief, the floods we all wept together—at no long interval—on those pale and placid faces as they lay, most beautiful and most dreadful to behold, in their coffins.

We believe that there is genius in all childhood. But the creative joy that makes it great in its simplicity dies a natural death or is killed, and genius dies with it. In favoured

spirits, neither few nor many, the joy and the might survive; for you must know that unless it be accompanied with imagination, memory is cold and lifeless. The forms it brings before us must be inspired with beauty—that is, with affection or passion. All minds, even the dullest, remember the days of their youth; but all cannot bring back the indescribable brightness of that blessed season. They who would know what they once were, must not merely recollect, but they must imagine, the hills and valleys—if any such there were—in which their childhood played, the torrents, the waterfalls, the lakes, the heather, the rocks, the heaven's imperial dome, the raven floating only a little lower than the eagle in the sky. To imagine what he then heard and saw, he must imagine his own nature. He must collect from many vanished hours the power of his untamed heart, and he must, perhaps, transfuse also something of his maturer mind into these dreams of his former being, thus linking the past with the present by a continuous chain, which, though often invisible, is never broken. So is it too with the calmer affections that have grown within the shelter of a roof. We do not merely remember, we imagine our father's house, the fireside, all his features then most living, now dead and buried; the very manner of his smile, every tone of his voice. We must combine with all the passionate and plastic power of imagination the spirit of a thousand happy hours into one moment; and we must invest with all that we ever felt to be venerable such an image as alone can satisfy our filial hearts. It is thus that imagination, which first aided the growth of all our holiest and happiest affections, can preserve them to us unimpaired—

“For she can give us back the dead,
Even in the loveliest looks they wore.”

Then came a New Series of Christmases, celebrated, one year in this family, another year in that—none present but those whom Charles Lamb the Delightful calleth the “old familiar faces;” something in all features, and all tones of voice, and all manners, betokening origin from one root—relations all, happy, and with no reason either to be ashamed or proud of their neither high nor humble birth—their lot being cast within that pleasant realm, “the Golden Mean,” where the dwellings are connecting links between the hut and the hall—fair edifices resembling manse or mansion-house, according as the atmosphere expands or contracts their dimensions—in which Competence is next-door neighbour to Wealth, and both of them within the daily walk of Contentment.

Merry Christmases they were indeed—one Lady always presiding, with a figure that once had been the stateliest among the stately, but then somewhat bent, without being bowed down, beneath an easy weight of most venerable years. Sweet was her tremulous voice to all her grandchildren's ears. Nor did these solemn eyes, bedimmed into a pathetic beauty, in any degree restrain the glee that sparkled in orbs that had as yet shed not many tears, but tears of joy or pity. Dearly she loved all those mortal creatures whom she was soon

about to leave; but she sat in sunshine even within the shadow of death; and the "voice that called her home" had so long been whispering in her ear, that its accents had become dear to her, and consolatory every word that was heard in the silence, as from another world.

Whether we were indeed all so witty as we thought ourselves—uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, cousins, and "the rest," it might be presumptuous in us, who were considered by ourselves and a few others not the least amusing of the whole set, at this distance of time to decide—especially in the affirmative; but how the roof did ring with sally, pun, retort, and repartee! Ay, with pun—a species of impertinence for which we have therefore a kindness even to this day. Had incomparable Thomas Hood had the good fortune to have been born a cousin of ours, how with that fine fancy of his would he have shone at those Christmas festivals, eclipsing us all! Our family, through all its different branches, has ever been famous for bad voices, but good ears; and we think we hear ourselves—all those uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, and cousins—singing now! Easy is it to "warble melody" as to breathe air. But we hope harmony is the most difficult of all things to people in general, for to us it was impossible; and what attempts ours used to be at Seconds! Yet the most woful failures were rapturously encored; and ere the night was done we spoke with most extraordinary voices indeed, every one hoarser than another, till at last, walking home with a fair cousin, there was nothing left for it but a tender glance of the eye—a tender pressure of the hand—for cousins are not altogether sisters, and although partaking of that dearest character, possess, it may be, some peculiar and appropriate charms of their own; as didst thou, Emily the "Wild-cap!"—That *sobriquet* all forgotten now—for now thou art a matron, nay a Grandam, and troubled with an elf fair and frolicsome as thou thyself wert of yore, when the gravest and wisest withstood not the witchery of thy dancings, thy singings, and thy showering smiles.

On rolled Suns and Seasons—the old died—the elderly became old—and the young, one after another, were wafted joyously away on the wings of hope, like birds almost as soon as they can fly, ungratefully forsaking their nests and the groves in whose safe shadow they first essayed their pinions; or like pinnaces that, after having for a few days trimmed their snow-white sails in the land-locked bay, close to whose shores of silvery sand had grown the trees that furnished timber both for hull and mast, slip their tiny cables on some summer day, and gathering every breeze that blows, go dancing over the waves in sunshine, and melt far off into the main. Or, haply, some were like fair young trees, transplanted during no favourable season, and never to take root in another soil, but soon leaf and branch to wither beneath the tropic sun, and die almost unheeded by those who knew not how beautiful they had been beneath the dews and mists of their own native climate.

Vain images! and therefore chosen by fancy not too painfully to touch the heart. For some hearts grew cold and forbidding with selfish cares—some, warm as ever in their own generous glow, were touched by the chill of Fortune's frowns, ever worst to bear when suddenly succeeding her smiles—some, to rid themselves of painful regrets, took refuge in forgetfulness, and closed their eyes to the past—duty banished some abroad, and duty imprisoned others at home—estrangements there were, at first unconscious and unintended, yet ere long, though causeless, complete—changes were wrought insensibly, invisibly, even in the innermost nature of those who being friends knew no guile, yet came thereby at last to be friends no more—unrequited love broke some bonds—requited love relaxed others—the death of one altered the conditions of many—and so—year after year—the Christmas Meeting was interrupted—deferred—till finally it ceased with one accord, unrenewed and unrenovable. For when Some Things cease for a time—that time turns out to be for ever.

Survivors of those happy circles! wherever ye be—should these imperfect remembrances of days of old chance, in some thoughtful pause of life's busy turmoil, for a moment to meet your eyes, let there be towards the inditer a few throbs of revived affection in your hearts—for his, though "absent long and distant far," has never been utterly forgetful of the loves and friendships that charmed his youth. To be parted in body is not to be estranged in spirit—and many a dream and many a vision, sacred to nature's best affections, may pass before the mind of one whose lips are silent. "Out of sight out of mind" is rather the expression of a doubt—of a fear—than of a belief or a conviction. The soul surely has eyes that can see the objects it loves, through all intervening darkness—and of those more especially dear it keeps within itself almost undimmed images, on which, when they know it not, think it not, believe it not, it often loves to gaze, as on relics imperishable as they are hallowed.

All hail! rising beautiful and magnificent through the mists of morning—ye Woods, Groves, Towers, and Temples, overshadowing that famous Stream beloved by all the Muses! Through this midnight hush—methinks we hear faint and far off sacred music—

"Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise!"

How steeped now in the stillness of moonlight are all those pale, pillared Churches, Courts and Cloisters, Shrines and Altars, with here and there a Statue standing in the shade, or Monument sacred to the memory of the pious—the immortal dead. Some great clock is striking from one of many domes—from the majestic Tower of St. Mary Magdalen—and in the deepened hush that follows the solemn sound, the mingling waters of the Cherwell and the Isis soften the severe silence of the holy night.

Remote from kindred, and from all the friendships that were the native growth of the fair fields where our boyhood and our youth

had roamed and meditated and dreamed, those were indeed years of high and lofty mood which held us in converse with the shades of great Poets and ages of old in Rhedicyna's hallowed groves, still, serene, and solemn, as that Attic Academe where divine Plato, with all Hybla on his lips, discoursed such excellent music that his life seemed to the imagination spiritualized—a dim reminiscence of some former state of being. How sank then the Christmas Service of that beautiful Liturgy into our hearts! Not faithless we to the simple worship that our forefathers had loved; but Conscience told us there was no apostasy in the feelings that rose within us when that deep organ began to blow, that choir of youthful voices so sweetly to join the diapason,—our eyes fixed all the while on that divine Picture over the Altar, of our Saviour

“Bearing his cross up rueful Calvary.”

The City of Palaces disappears—and in the setting sun-light we behold mountains of soft crimson snow! The sun hath set, and even more beautiful are the bright-starred nights of winter, than summer in all its glories beneath the broad moons of June. Through the woods of Windermere, from cottage to cottage, by coppice-pathways winding up to dwellings among the hill-rocks where the birch-trees cease to grow—

“Nodding their heads, before us go,
The merry minstrelsy.”

They sing a salutation at every door, familiarly naming old and young by their Christian names; and the eyes that look upward from the vales to the hanging huts among the plats and cliffs, see the shadows of the dancers ever and anon crossing the light of the star-like window, and the merry music is heard like an echo dwelling in the sky. Across those humble thresholds often did we on Christmas-week nights of yore—wandering through our solitary silvan haunts, under the branches of trees within whose hollow trunk the squirrel slept—venture in, unasked perhaps, but not unwelcome, and, in the kindly spirit of the season, did our best to merryify the Festival by tale or song. And now that we behold them not, are all those woods, and cliffs, and rivers, and tarns, and lakes, as beautiful as when they softened and brightened beneath our living eyes, half-creating, as they gazed, the very world they worshipped? And are all those hearths as bright as of yore, without the shadow of our figure? And the roofs, do they ring as mirthfully, though our voice be forgotten? We hang over Westmoreland, an unobserved—but observant star. Mountains, hills, rocks, knolls, vales, woods, groves, single trees, dwellings—all asleep! O Lakes! but ye are, indeed, by far too beautiful! O fortunate Isles! too fair for human habitation, fit abode for the Blest! It will not hide itself—it will not sink into the earth—it will rise; and risen, it will stand steady with its shadow in the overpowering moonlight, that **ONE TREE!** that **ONE HOUSE!**—and well might the sight of ye two together—were it harder—break our heart. But hard at all it is not—therefore it is but crushed.

Can it be that there we are utterly forgotten! No star hanging higher than the Andes in heaven—but sole-sitting at midnight in a small chamber—a melancholy man are we—and there seems a smile of consolation, O Wordsworth! on thy sacred Bust.

Alas! how many heavenly days, “seeming immortal in their depth of rest,” have died and been forgotten! Treacherous and ungrateful is our memory even of bliss that overflowed our being as light our habitation. Our spirit's deepest intercommunion with nature has no place in her records—blanks are there that ought to have been painted with imperishable imagery, and steeped in sentiment fresh as the morning on life's golden hills. Yet there is mercy in this dispensation—for who can bear to behold the light of bliss re-aring from the past on the ghastlier gloom of present misery? The phantoms that will not come when we call on them to comfort us, are too often at our side when in our anguish we could almost pray that they might be reburied in oblivion. Such hauntings as these are not as if they were visionary—they come and go like forms and shapes still imbued with life. Shall we vainly stretch out our arms to embrace and hold them fast, or as vainly seek to intrench ourselves by thought of this world against their visitation? The soul in its sickness knows not whether it be the duty of love to resign itself to indifference or to despair. Shall it enjoy life, they being dead! Shall we, the survivors, for yet a little while, walk in other companionship out into the day, and let the sunbeams settle on their heads as they used to do, or cover them with dust and ashes, and show to those in heaven that love for them is now best expressed by remorse and penitence!

Sometimes we have fears about our memory—that it is decaying; for, lately, many ordinary yet interesting occurrences and events, which we regarded at the time with pain or pleasure, have been slipping away almost into oblivion, and have often alarmed us of a sudden by their return, not to any act of recollection, but of themselves, sometimes wretchedly out of place and season, the mournful obtruding upon the merry, and worse, the merry upon the mournful—confusion, by no fault of ours, of piteous and of gladsome faces—tears where smiles were a duty as well as a delight, and smiles where nature demanded, and religion hallowed, a sacrifice of tears.

For a good many years we have been tied to town in winter by fetters as fine as frostwork filigree, which we could not break without destroying a whole world of endearment. That seems an obscure image; but it means what the Germans would call in English—our winter environment. We are imprisoned in a net of our own weaving—an invisible net; yet we can see it when we choose—just as a bird can see, when he chooses, the wires of his cage, that are invisible in his happiness, as he keeps hopping and fluttering about all day long, or haply dreaming on his perch with his poll under his plumes—as free in confinement as if let loose into the boundless sky. That seems an obscure image too; but we mean, in truth, the prison unto which we doom ourselves no

prison is; and we have improved on that idea, for we have built our own—and are prisoner, turnkey, and jailer all in one, and 'tis noiseless as the house of sleep. Or what if we declare that Christopher North is a king in his palace, with no subjects but his own thoughts—his rule peaceful over those lights and shadows—and undisputed to reign over them his right divine.

The opening year in a town, now answers in all things to our heart's desire. How beautiful the smoky air! The clouds have a homely look as they hang over the happy families of houses, and seem as if they loved their birth-place;—all unlike those heartless clouds that keep *stravaigging* over mountain-tops, and have no domicile in the sky! Poets speak of living rocks, but what is their life to that of houses? Who ever saw a rock with eyes—that is, with windows? Stone-blind all, and stone-deaf, and with hearts of stone; whereas who ever saw a house without eyes—that is, windows? Our own is an Argus; yet the good old Conservative grudges not the assessed taxes—his optics are as cheerful as the day that lends them light, and they love to salute the setting sun, as if a hundred beacons, level above level, were kindled along a mountain side. He might safely be pronounced a madman who preferred an avenue of trees to a street. Why, trees have no chimneys; and, were you to kindle a fire in the hollow of an oak, you would soon be as dead as a Druid. It won't do to talk to us of sap, and the circulation of sap. A grove in winter, bole and branch—leaves it has none—is as dry as a volume of sermons. But a street, or a square, is full of "vital sparks of heavenly flame" as a volume of poetry; and the heart's blood circulates through the system like rosy wine.

But a truce to comparisons; for we are beginning to feel contrition for our crime against the country, and, with humbled head and heart, we beseech you to pardon us—ye rocks of Pavvy-Ark, the pillared palaces of the storms—ye clouds, now wreathing a diadem for the forehead of Helvellyn—ye trees, that hang the shadows of your undying beauty over the "one perfect chrysolite," of blessed Windermere!

Our meaning is transparent now as the hand of an apparition waving peace and good-will to all dwellers in the land of dreams. In plainer but not simpler words, (for words are like flowers, often rich in their simplicity—witness the Lily, and Solomon's Song)—Christian people all, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New-Year, in town or in country—or in ships at sea.

A Happy New-Year!—Ah! ere this *ARIA*, sung *sotto voce*, reach your ears, (eyes are ears, and ears are eyes,) the week of all weeks will be over and gone, and the New-Year will seem growing out of the old year's ashes!—for the year is your only Phœnix. But what with time to do has a wish—a hope—a prayer! Their power is in the Spirit that gives them birth. And what is Spirit but the well-head of thoughts and feelings flowing and overflowing all life, yet leaving the well-head full of water as ever—so lucid, that on your gazing intently into its depths, it seems to become a large soft spi-

ritual eye, reflecting the heavens and the earth; and no one knows what the heavens and the earth are, till he has seen them there—for that God made the heavens and the earth we feel from that beautiful revelation—and where feeling is not, knowledge is dead, and a blank the universe. Love is life. The unloving merely breathe. A single sweet beat of the heart is token of something spiritual that will be with us again in Paradise. "O, bliss and beauty! are these our feelings"—thought we once in a dream—"all circling in the sunshine—fair plumed in a flight of doves!" The vision kept sailing on the sky—"to and fro for our delight!"—no sound on their wings more than on their breasts; and they melted away in light as if they were composed of light—and in the hush we heard high up and far-off music—as of an angel's song.

That was a dream of the mysterious night; but now we are broad awake—and see no emblematical phantoms, but the mere sights of the common day. But sufficient for the day is the beauty thereof—and it inspires us with affection for all beneath the skies. Will the whole world, then, promise henceforth to love us?—and we promise henceforth to love the whole world.

It seems the easiest of all easy things to be kind and good—and then it is so pleasant! "Self-love and social are the same," beyond all question; and in that lies the nobility of our nature. The intensest feeling of self is that of belonging to a brotherhood. All selves then know they have duties which are in truth loves—and loves are joys—whether breathed in silence, or uttered in words, or embodied in actions; and if they filled all life, then all life would be good—and heaven would be no more than a better earth. And how may all men go to heaven? By making themselves a heaven on earth, and thus preparing their spirits to breathe empyreal air when they have dropped the dust. And how may they make for themselves a heaven on earth? By building up a happy HOME FOR THE HEART. Much, but not all—oh! not nearly all—is in the site. But it must be within the precincts of the holy ground—and within hearing of the waters of life.

Pleasures of Imagination! Pleasures of Memory! Pleasures of Hope! All three most delightful poems; yet all the thoughts and all the feelings that inspired them—etherialized—will not make FAITH! "The day-spring from on high hath visited us!" Blessed is he who feels that line—nor need his heart die within him, were a voice to be heard at midnight saying—"This New-Year's day shall be thy last!"

One voice—one young voice—all by its sweet, sad, solitary self, singing to us a Christmas Hymn! Listening to that music is like looking at the sky with all its stars.

Was it a spirit?

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk unseen,
Sole or responsive to each other's voice,
Hymning their great Creator."

No, the singer, like ourselves, is mortal; and in that thought, to our hearts, lies the pathos of her prayers. The angels, veiling their faces

with their wings, sing in their bliss hallelujahs round the throne of heaven; but she—a poor child of clay, with her face veiled but with the shades of humility and contrition, while

“Some natural tears she drops, but wipes them soon,”—

sings, in her sorrow, supplications to be suffered to see afar-off its everlasting gates—opening not surely for her own sake—for all of woman born are sinful—and even she in what love calls her innocence feels that her fallen being does of itself deserve but to die. The hymn is fading away, liker and liker an echo, and our spirit having lost it in the distance, returns back holier to the heart-hush of home!

The million hunger and thirst after the stronger and darker passions; nothing will go down with them but *the intense*. They are intolerant—or careless—or even ashamed of those emotions and affections that compose the blessing of our daily life, and give its lustre to the fire on the hearth of every Christian household. Yet, for all that, they are inexperienced in those same stronger and darker passions of which they prate, and know nothing of the import of those pictures of them painted, with background of gloom and foreground of fire, in the works of the truly great masters. The disturbed spirit of such delineations is far beyond the reaches of their souls; and they mistake their own senseless stupor for solemn awe—or their own mere physical excitement for the enthusiasm of imagination soaring through the storm on the wings of intellect. There are such things in “Satan’s Invisible World Displayed” in poetry, as strong and dark passions; and they who are acquainted with their origin and end call them *bad* passions; but the good passions are not dark, but bright—and they are strong too, stronger than death or the grave.

All human beings who know how to reap

“The harvest of a quiet eye,
That broods and sleeps on its own heart,”

feel, by the touch, the flowers of affection in every handful of beauty they gather up from those fortunate fields on which shines, for ever through all seasons, the sun of life. How soft the leaves! and, as they meet the eye, how fair! Framed, so might it seem, of green dew consolidated into fragrance. Nor do they fade when gently taken from their stalk on its native bed. They flourish for ever if you bruise them not—sensitive indeed; and, if you are so forgetful as to treat them rashly, like those of the plant that bears that name, they shrink, and seem to shrivel for a time—growing pale, as if upbraiding your harshness; but cherished, they are seen to be all of

“Immortal amaranth, the tree that grows
Fast by the throne of God;”

for the seeds have fallen from heaven to earth, and for eighteen hundred years have been spreading themselves over all soils fit for their reception—and what soil is not fit? Even fit are stony places, and places full of thorns. For they will live and grow there in spite of such obstruction—and among rank and matted weeds will often be seen peering out like primroses gladdening the desert.

That voice again—“One of old Scotland’s songs, so sad and slow!” Her heart is now blamelessly with things of earth. “Sad and slow!” and most purely sweet. Almost mournful although it be, it breathes of happiness—for the joy dearest to the soul has ever a faint tinge of grief. O innocent enchantress! thou encirclest us with a wavering haze of beautiful imagery, by the spell of that voice awakening after a mood of awe, but for thy own delight. From the long dim tracts of the past come strangely blended recognitions of woe and bliss, undistinguishable now to our own heart—nor knows that heart if it be a dream of imagination or of memory. Yet why should we wonder? In our happiest hours there may have been something in common with our most sorrowful—some shade of sadness cast over them by a passing cloud, that now allies them in retrospect with the sombre spirit of grief; and in our unhappiest hours there may have been gleams of gladness, that seem now to give the return the calm character of peace. Do not all thoughts and feelings, almost all events, seem to resemble each other—when they are dreamt of as all past? All receive a sort of sanctification in the stillness of the time that has gone by—just like the human being whom they adorned or degraded—when they, too, are at last buried together in the bosom of the same earth.

Perhaps none among us ever wrote verses of any worth, who had not been, more or less, readers of our old ballads. All our poets have been so—and even Wordsworth would not have been the veritable and only Wordsworth, had he not in boyhood pored—oh, the miser!—over Percy’s Reliques. From the highest to the humblest, they have all drunk from those silver springs. Shepherds and herdsmen and woodsmen have been the masters of the mighty—their strains have, like the voice of a solitary lute, inspired a power of sadness into the hearts of great poets that gave their genius to be prevalent over all tears, or with a power of sublimity that gave it dominion over all terror, like the sound of a trumpet. The Babes in the Wood! Chevy Chase! Men become women while they weep—

“Or start up heroes from the glorious strain.”

Sing then, “The Dirge,” my Margaret, to the Old Man, “so tender and so true” to the spirit of those old ballads, which one might think were written by Pity’s self.

DIRGE.

“O dig a grave, and dig it deep,
Where I and my true love may sleep!
We’ll dig a grave and dig it deep,
Where thou and thy true love shall sleep!

“And let it be five fathom low,
Where winter winds may never blow!—
And it shall be five fathom low,
Where winter winds shall never blow!

“And let it be on yonder hill,
Where grows the mountain daffodil!
And it shall be on yonder hill,
Where grows the mountain daffodil!

“And plant it round with holy briers,
To fright away the fairy fires!—
We’ll plant it round with holy briers!
To fright away the fairy fires!

"And set it round with celandine,
And nodding heads of columbine!—
We'll set it round with celandine,
And nodding heads of columbine!

"And let the ruddock build his nest
Just above my true love's breast!—
The ruddock he shall build his nest
Just above thy true love's breast!

"And warble his sweet wintry song
O'er our dwelling all day long!
And he shall warble his sweet song
O'er your dwelling all day long.

"Now, tender friends, my garments take,
And lay me out for Jesus's sake!
And we will now thy garments take,
And lay thee out for Jesus' sake.

"And lay me by my true love's side,
That I may be a faithful bride!—
We'll lay thee by thy true love's side,
That thou may'st be a faithful bride!"

Ay—ay—thou too art gone, WILLIAM STANLEY ROSCOE! What years have flown since we walked among the "alleys green" of Al-lerton with thee and thy illustrious father! and who ever conversed with him for a few hours in and about his own home—where the stream of life flowed on so full and clear—without carrying away impressions that never seemed to be remembrances—so vivid have they remained amidst the obscurations and obliterations of time, that sweeps with his wings all

that lies on the surface, but has no power to disturb, much less destroy, the record printed on the heart.

We are all of us getting old—or older; nor would we, for our own part—if we could—renew our youth. Methinks the river of life is nobler as it nears the sea. The young are dancing in their skiffs on the pellucid shallows near the source on the Sacred Mountains of the Golden East. They whose lot it is to be in their prime, are dropping down the longer and wider reaches, that seem wheeling by with their silvan amphitheatres, as if the beauty were moving mornwards, while the voyagers are stationary among the shadows, or slowly descending the stream to meet the meridian day. Many forget

"The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below,"

and are lost in the roaring whirlpool. Under Providence, we see ourselves on the river expanded into a sealike lake, or arm of the sea; and for all our soul has escaped and suffered, we look up to the stars in gratitude—and down to the stars—for the water too is full of stars as well as the sky—faint and dim indeed—but blended, by the pervading spirit of beauty, with the brighter and bolder luminaries reposing on infinitude.

OUR WINTER QUARTERS.

BUCHANAN LODGE—for a few months—farewell! 'Tis the Twelfth of November; and for the City we leave thee not without reluctance, early in March by the blessing of Heaven again to creep into thy blooming bourne. Yet now and then we shall take a drive down, to while away a sunny forenoon among thy undecaying evergreens, to breathe the balm of thy Christmas roses, and for one *Gentle* bosom to cull the earliest crocuses that may be yellowing through the thin snows of Spring.

In truth, we know not well why we should ever leave thee, for thou art the Darling of all the Seasons; and Winter, so churlish elsewhere, is ever bland to thee, and, daily alighting in these gardens, loves to fold and unfold, in the cool sunshine, the stainless splendour of his pale-plumaged wings. But we are no hermit. Dear to us though Nature be, here, hand-in-hand with Art walking through our peaceful but not unpeopled POLICE, a voice comes to us from the city-heart—winning us away from the stillness of solitude into the stir of life. Milton speaks of a region

"Above the stir and smoke of this dim spot,
Which men call Earth;"

and oft have we visited it; but while yet we pursue the ends of this our mortal being, in the mystery of the brain whence ideas arise, and in the mystery of the heart whence emotions flow—kindred and congenial all—thought ever blending with feeling, reason with imagination, and conscience with passion—'tis our duty to draw our delight from intercommunion

with the spirit of our kind. Weakest or wickedest of mortals are your soul-sick, life-loathing, world-wearied men. In solitude we are prone to be swallowed up in selfishness; and out of selfishness what sins and crimes may not grow! At the best, moral stagnation ensues—and the spirit becomes, like "a green-mantled pool," the abode of reptiles. Then ever welcome to us be living faces, and living voices, the light and the music of reality—dearer far than any mere ideas or emotions hanging or floating aloof by themselves in the atmosphere of imagination. Blest be the cordial grasp of the hand of friendship—blest the tender embrace of the arms of love! Nay, smile not, fair reader, at an old man's fervour; for Love is a gracious spirit, who deserteth not declining age.

The DROSKY is at the door—and, my eye! what a figure is Peter! There he sits, like a bear, with the ribands in his paws—no part visible of his human face or form divine, but his small red eyes—and his ruby nose, whose re-grown enormity laughs at Liston. One little month ago, the knife of that skilful surgeon pared it down to the dimensions of a Christian proboscis. Again 'tis like a wart on a frost-reddened Swedish turnip. Pretty Poll, with small delicate pale features, sits beside him like a snowdrop. How shaggy since he returned from our last Highland tour is Filho da Puta! His name long as his tail—and the hair on his ears like that on his fetlocks. He absolutely reminds us of Hogg's Bonassus.

Ay, bless these patent steps—on the same principle as those by which we ascend our nightly couch—we are self-deposited in our Drosky. Oh! the lazy luxury of an air-seat! We seem to be sitting on nothing but a voluptuous warmth, restorative as a bath. And then what furry softness envelopes our feet! Yes—Mrs. Gentle—Mrs. Gentle—thy Cashmere shawl, twined round our bust, feels almost as silken-smoothe as thine own, and scented is it with the balm of thy own lips. Boreas blows on it tenderly as a zephyr—and the wintry sunshine seems summery as it plays on the celestial colours. Thy pelisse, too, over our old happy shoulders, purple as the neck of the dove when careering round his mate. Thy comforter, too, in our bosom—till the dear, delightful, delicious, wicked worsted thrills through skin and flesh to our very heart. It dirls. Drive away, Peter. Farewell Lodge—and welcome, in a jiffy, Moray Place.

And now, douchely and decently sitting in our Drosky, behold us driven by Peter, proud as Punch to tool along the staring streets the great-grandson of the Desert-born! Yet—yet—couldst thou lead the field, Filho, with old Filho, with old Kit Castor on thy spine. But though our day be not quite gone by, we think we see the stealing shades of eve, and, a little further on in the solemn vista, the darkness of night; and therefore, like wise children of nature, not unproud of the past, not ungrateful for the present, and unfeared of the future, thus do we now skim along the road of life, broad and smooth to our heart's content, able to pay the turnpikes, and willing, when we shall have reached the end of our journey, to lie down, in hope, at the goal.

What pretty, little, low lines of garden-fronted cottages! leading us along out of rural into suburban cheerfulness, across the Bridge, and past the Oriental-looking Oil-Gas Works, with a sweep winding into the full view of Prrr Street, (what a glorious name!) steep as some straight cliff-glen, and an approach truly majestic—yea, call it at once magnificent—right up to the great city's heart. "There goes Old Christopher North!" the bright boys in the playground of the New Academy exclaim. God bless you, you little rascals!—We could almost find it in our heart to ask the Rector for a holiday. But, under him, all your days are holidays—for when the precious hours of study are enlightened by a classic spirit, how naturally do they melt into those of play!

"Gay hope is yours, by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast;
Yours buxom health, of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer, of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn."

Descending from our Drosky, we find No. 99, Moray Place, exhibiting throughout all its calm interior the selfsame expression it wore the day we left it for the Lodge, eight months ago. There is our venerable winter Hat—as like Ourselves, it is said, as he can stare—sitting on the Circular in the Entrance-hall.

Every thing has been tenderly dusted as if by hands that touched with a Sabbath feeling; and though the furniture cannot be said to be new, yet while it is in all sobered, it is in nothing faded. You are at first unaware of its richness on account of its simplicity—its grace is felt gradually to grow out of its comfort—and that which you thought but ease lightens into elegance, while there is but one image in nature which can adequately express its repose—that of a hill-sheltered field by sunset, under a fresh-fallen vest of virgin snow. For then snow blushes with a faint crimson—nay, sometimes when Sol is extraordinarily splendid, not faint, but with a gorgeousness of colouring that fears not to face in rivalry the western clouds.

Let no man have two houses with one set of furniture. Home's deepest delight is undisturbance. Some people think no articles fixtures—not even grates. But sofas and ottomans, and chairs and footstools, and screens—and above all, beds—all are fixtures in the dwelling of a wise man, cognoscitive and sensitive of the blessings of this life. Each has its own place assigned to it by the taste, tact, and feeling of the master of the mansion, where order and elegance minister to comfort, and comfort is but a homely word for happiness. In various moods we vary their arrangement—nor is even the easiest of all Easy-chairs secure for life against being gently pushed on his wheels from chimney-nook to window-corner, when the sunshine may have extinguished the fire, and the blue sky tempts the *Pater-familias*, or him who is but an uncle, to lie back with half-shut eyes, and gaze upon the cheerful purity, even like a shepherd on the hill. But these little occasional disarrangements serve but to preserve the spirit of permanent arrangement, without which the very virtue of domesticity dies. What sacrilege, therefore, against the Lares and Penates, to turn a whole house topsy-turvy, from garret to cellar, regularly as May-flowers deck the zone of the year! Why, a Turkey or a Persian, or even a Wilton or a Kidderminster carpet is as much the garb of the wooden floor inside, as the grass is of the earthen floor outside of your house. Would you lift and lay down the greensward! But without further illustration—be assured the cases are kindred—and so, too, with sofas and shrubs, tent-beds and trees. Independently, however, of these analogies, not fanciful, but lying deep in the nature of things, the inside of one's tabernacle, in town and country, ought ever to be sacred from all radical revolutionary movements, and to lie for ever in a waking dream of graceful repose. All our affections towards lifeless things become tenderer and deeper in the continuous and unbroken flow of domestic habit. The eye gets lovingly familiarized with each object occupying its own peculiar and appropriate place, and feels in a moment when the most insignificant is missing or removed. We say not a word about children, for fortunately, since we are yet unmarried, we have none; but even they, if brought up Christians, are no dissenters from this creed, and however rackety in the nursery, in an orderly kept parlour or

drawing-room how like so many pretty little white mice do they glide cannily along the floor! Let no such horror, then, as a *flitting* ever befall us or our friends! O mercy! only look at a long huge train of wagons, heaped up to the windows of the first floors, moving along the dust-driving or mire-choked streets with furniture from a gutted town-house towards one standing in the rural shades with an empty stomach! All is dimmed or destroyed—chairs crushed on the table-land, and four-posted beds lying helplessly with their astonished feet up to heaven—a sight that might make the angels weep!

People have wondered why we, an old barren bachelor, should live in such a large house. It is a palace; but never was there a greater mistake than to seek the solution in our pride. Silence can be had but in a large house. And silence is the chief condition of home happiness. We could now hear a leaf fall—a leaf of the finest wire-weave. Peter and Betty, Polly and the rest, inhabit the second sunk story—and it is delightful to know that they may be kicking up the most infernal disturbance at this blessed moment, and tearing out each other's hair in handfuls, without the faintest whisper of the uproar reaching us in our altitude above the drawing-room flat. On New-Year's Day morning there is regularly a competition of bag-pipers in the kitchen, and we could fondly imagine 'tis an Eolian Harp. In his pantry Peter practised for years on the shrill clarion, and for years on the echoing horn; yet had he thrown up both instruments in despair of perfection ere we so much as knew that he had commenced his musical studies. In the sunk story, immediately below *that*, having been for a season consumptive, we kept a Jenny ass and her daughter—and though we believe it was not unheard around Moray and Ainslie Places, and even in Charlotte Square, we cannot charge our memory with an audit of their bray. In the sunk story immediately below that again, that distinguished officer on half pay, Captain Campbell of the Highlanders—when on a visit to us for a year or two—though we seldom saw him—got up a *Sma' still*—and though a more harmless creature could not be, there he used to sit for hours together, with the worm that never dies. On one occasion, it having been supposed by Peter that the Captain had gone to the East Neuk of Fife, weeks elapsed, we remember, ere he was found sitting dead, just as if he had been alive, in his usual attitude in his arm-chair, commanding a view of the precipice of the back court.

Just as quiet are the Attics. They, too, are furnished; for the feeling of there being one unfurnished room, however small, in the largest house, disturbs the entire state of mind of such an occupant, and when cherished and dwelt on, which it must not unfrequently be, inspires a cold air of desolation throughout the domicile, till "thoughts of flitting rise." There is no lumber-room. The room containing Blue-Beard's murdered wives might in idea be entered without distraction by a bold mind.—But oh! the lumber-room, into which, on an early walk through the house of a friend on

whom we had been sorning, all unprepared did we once set our foot! From the moment, and it was but for a moment, and about six o'clock—far away in the country—that appalling vision met our eyes—till we found ourselves, about another six o'clock, in Moray Place, we have no memory of the flight of time. Part of the journey—or voyage—we suspect, was performed in a steamer. The noise of knocking, and puffing, and splashing seems to be in our inner ears; but after all it may have been a sail-boat, possibly a yacht!—In the Attics an Aviary open to the sky. And to us below, the many voices, softened into one sometimes in the pauses of severer thought, are sometimes very affecting, so serenely sweet it seems, as the laverocks' in our youth at the gates of heaven.

At our door stand the Guardian Genii, Sleep and Silence. We had an ear to them in the building of our house, and planned it after a long summer day's perusal of the Castle of Indolence. O Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson!—O that thou and we had been rowers in the same boat on the silent river! Rowers, indeed! Short the spells and far between that we should have taken—the one would not have turned round the other but when the oar chanced to drop out of his listless hand—and the canoe would have been allowed to drift with the stream, unobservant we of our backward course, and wondering and then ceasing to wonder at the slow receding beauty of the hanging banks of grove—the cloud mountains, immovable as those of earth, and in spirit one world.

Ay! Great noise as we have made in the world—our heart's desire is for silence—its delight is in peace. And is it not so with all men, turbulent as may have been their lives, who have ever looked into their own being? The soul longs for peace in itself; therefore, wherever it discerns it, it rejoices in the image of which it seeks the reality. The serene human countenance, the wide water sleeping in the moonlight, the stainless marble-depth of the immeasurable heavens, reflect to it that tranquillity which it imagines within itself, though it never long dwelt there, restless as a dove on a dark tree that cannot be happy but in the sunshine. It loves to look on what it loves, even though it cannot possess it; and hence its feeling on contemplating such calm, is not of simple repose, but desire stirs in it, as if it would fain blend itself more deeply with the quiet it beholds! The sleep of a desert would not so affect it; it is Beauty that makes the difference—that attracts spirit to matter, while spirit becomes not thereby materialized—but matter spiritualized; and we fluctuate in the air-boat of imagination between earth and heaven. In most and in all great instances there is apprehension, dim and faint, or more distinct, of pervasion of a spirit throughout that which we conceive Beautiful. Stars, the moon, the deep bright ether, waters, the rainbow, a pure lovely flower—none of them ever appear to us, or are believed by us to be mere physical and unconscious dead aggregates of atoms. That is what they are; but we could have no pleasure in them, if we knew them as such.

There is allusion, then, of some sort, and to what does it amount? We cannot well tell. But if there is really a love in human hearts to these distant orbs—if there is an emotion of tenderness to the fair, opening, breathing blossom that we would not crush it—"in gentleness of heart touch, for there is a spirit in the leaves"—it must be that we do not see them as they are, but "create a soul under the ribs of death." We could not be touched, or care for what has no affinity to ourselves—we make the affinity—we animate, we vivify them, and thenceforward,

"Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus,
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."

Now you do believe that we do love Silence—and every other thing worthy to be loved—you and yours—and even that romp, your shock-headed Coz, to whom Priscilla Tomboy was an Imogen.

All our ceilings are deadened—we walk ankle-deep in carpeting—nobody is suffered to open a door but ourselves—and they are so constructed, that it is out of their power to *slam*. Our winter furniture is all massy—deepening the repose. In all the large rooms two fireplaces—and fires are kept perpetually burning day and night, in them all, which, reflected from spacious mirrors, give the mansion quite the appearance of a Pandemonium. *Not gas always*. Palm-oil burns scentless as moonlight; and when motion, not rest, in a place is signified, we accompany ourselves with a wax candle, or taper from time immemorial green. Yet think not that there is a blaze of light. We have seen the midnight heaven and earth nearly as bright, with but one moon and a small scatter of stars. And places of glimmer—and places of gloom—and places "deaf to sound and blind to light" there are in this our mansion, known but to ourselves—cells—penitentiaries—where an old man may sit sighing and groaning, or stupified in his misery—or at times almost happy. So senseless, and worse than senseless seems then all mortal tribulation and anguish while the self-communing soul is assured, by its own profound responses, that "whatever is, is best."

And thus is our domicile a domain—a kingdom. We should not care to be confined to it all the rest of our days. Seldom, indeed, do we leave our own door—yet call on us, and ten to one you hear us in winter chirping like a cricket, or in summer like a grasshopper. We have the whole range of the house to ourselves, and many an Excursion make we on the Crutch. Ascending and descending the wide-winding staircases, each broad step not above two inches high, we find ourselves on spacious landing-places illumined by the dim religious light of stained windows, on which pilgrims, and palmers, and prophets, single, or in pairs or troops, are travelling on missions through glens or forests or by sea-shores—or shepherd piping in the shade, or poet playing with the tangles of Neæra's hair. We have discovered a new principle on which, within narrow bounds, we have constructed Panoramic Dioramas, that show splendid segments of the great circle of the world. We paint all of them ourselves—now a Poussin, now a Thomson,

now a Claude, now a Turner, now a Rubens, now a Danby, now a Salvator, now a Maclise.

Most people, nay, we suspect all people but ourselves, make a point of sleeping in the same bed (that is awkwardly expressed) all life through; and out of that bed many of them avow their inability to "bow an eye;" such is the power of custom, of habit, of use and wont, over weary mortals even in the blessing of sleep. No such slavish fidelity do we observe towards any one bed of the numerous beds in our mansion. No one dormitory is entitled to plume itself, in the pride of its heart, on being peculiarly Ours; nor is any one suffered to sink into despondency from being debarred the privilege of contributing to Our repose. They are all furnished, if not luxuriously, comfortably in the extreme; in number, nine—each, of course, with its two dressing-rooms—those on the same story communicating with one another, and with the parlours, drawing-rooms, and libraries—"a mighty maze, but not without a plan," and all harmoniously combined by one prevailing and pervading spirit of quietude by day and by night, awake or asleep—the chairs being couch-like, the couches bed-like, the beds, whether tent or canopy, enveloped in a drapery of dreams.

We go to bed at no stated hour—but when we are tired of sitting up, then do we lie down; at any time of the night or the day; and we rise, neither with the lark, nor the swallow, nor the sparrow, nor the cock, nor the owl, nor the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor Lucifer, nor Aurora, but with Christopher North. Yellow, or green, or blue, or crimson, or fawn, or orange, or pinky light salutes our eyes, as sleep's visionary worlds recede and relapse into airy nothing, and as we know of a certainty that *these* are real web and woof damask curtains, *that* flock palpable on substantial walls.

True wisdom soon accommodates itself even to involuntary or inevitable change—but to that which flows from our own sweet will, however sudden and strong, it instantly moulds itself in a novel delight, with all its familiar and domestic habits. Why, we have not been in 99, Moray Place, for a week—nay, not for two days and nights—till you might swear we had been all our life a Cit, we look so like a Native. The rustic air of the Lodge has entirely left us, and all our movements are metropolitan. You see before you a Gentleman of the Old School, who knows that the eyes of the town are upon him when he seeks the open air, and who preserves, even in the privacy of the parlour, that dignity of dress and demeanour which, during winter, befits his age, his rank, and his character. Now, we shave every morning; John, who in his boyish days served under Barbarossa, lightly passes the comb through our "sable silvered;" and then, in our shawl dressing-gown, we descend about ten to our study, and sit, not unstatelily, beside the hissing urn at our protracted breakfast. In one little month or less, "or ere our shoes are old," we feel as if we had belonged to *this* house alone, and it to us, from our birth. The Lodge is seen to be standing in its stillness, far away! Dear memories of the ten

sive past now and then come floating upon the cheerful present—like birds of fairest plumage floating far inland from the main. But there is no idle longing—no vain regret. This, we say, is true wisdom. For each scene and season—each pleasure and place—ought to be trusted to itself in the economy of human life, and to be allowed its own proper power over our spirit. People in the country are often restless to return to town—and people in town unhappy till they rush away into the country—thus cheating their entire existence out of its natural calm and satisfaction. Not so we. We give both their due—and that due is an almost undivided delight in each while we live under its reign. For Nature, believe us, is no jealous mistress. She is an affectionate wife, who, being assured of his fidelity, is not afraid to trust her husband out of her sight,

“When still the town affairs do call him thence,”

and who waits with cheerful patience for his return, duly welcomed with a conjugal shower of smiles and kisses.

But what is this we see before us? Winter—we declare—and in full fig with his powdered wig! On the mid-day of November, absolutely snow! a full, fair, and free fall of indisputable snow.

Not the slightest idea had we, the day before, that a single flake had yet been formed in the atmosphere, which, on closing of our shutters, looked through the clear-obscure, indicative of a still night and a bright morning. But we had not seen the moon. She, we are told by an eyewitness, early in the evening, *stared* from the south-east, “through the misty horizontal air,” with a face of portentous magnitude and brazen hue, symptomatic, so weatherwise seers do say, of the approach of the Snow-king. On such occasions it requires all one’s astronomical science to distinguish between sun and moon; for then sister resembles brother in that wan splendour, and you wonder for a moment, as the large beamless orb (how unlike Dian’s silver bow!) is in ascension, what can have brought the lord of day, at this untimely hour, from his sea-couch behind the mountains of the west. Yet during the night-calm we suspected snow—for the hush of the heavens had that downy feel to our half-sleeping fancy, that belongs to the eider-pillow in which disappears our aged, honoured, and un-night-caped head. Looking out by peep of day—rather a ghostlike appearance in our long night-shirt, which trails a regal train—we beheld the fair feathers dimly descending through the glimmer, while momentarily the world kept whitening and whitening, till we knew not our home-returning white cat on what was yesterday the back-green, but by the sable tail that singularly shoots from the rump of that phenomenon. We were delighted. Into the cold plunge-bath we played plop like a salmon—and came out as red as a cut of that incomparable fish. One ply of leather—one of flannel—and one of the linen fine; and then the suit of pepper and salt over all; and you behold us welcoming, hailing, and blessing the return of day. Frost, too, felt, at the finger and toe tips—and in unequivocal true-blue at the point,

Pensive Public, of thy Grecian or Roman nose. Furs, at once, are all the rage; the month of muffs has come; and round the neck of Eve, and every one of all her daughters, is seen harmlessly coiling a boa-constrictor. On their lovely cheeks the Christmas roses are already in full blow, and the heart of Christopher North sings aloud for joy. Furred, muffed, and boad’d, Mrs. Gentle adventures abroad in the blast; and, shouldering his Crutch, the rough, ready, and ruddy old man shows how widows are won, whispers in that delicate ear of the publication of bans, and points his gouty toe towards the hymeneal altar. In the bracing air, his frame is strung like Paganini’s fiddle, and he is felt to be irresistible in the *piggicato*. “Lord of his presence, and small land beside,” what cares he even for a knight of the Guelphic order? On his breast shines a star—may it never prove a cross—beyond bestowal by king or kaiser; nor is Maga’s self jealous or envious of these wedded loves. And who knows but that ere another November snow sheets the Shotts, a curious little Kitt, with the word North distinctly traceable in blue letters on the whites of his eyes, may not be playing antics on his mother’s knee, and with the true Tory face in miniature, smiling upon the guardian of the merry fellow’s own and his country’s constitution?

What kind of a Winter—we wonder—are we to have in the way of wind and weather? We trust it will be severe. As summer set in with his usual severity, Winter must not be behindhand with him; but after an occasional week’s rain of a commendably boisterous character, must come out in full fig of frost. He has two suits which we greatly admire, combining the splendour of a court-dress with the strength of a work-day garb—we mean his garments of black and his garments of white frost. He looks best in the former, we think, on to about Christmas—and the latter become the old gentleman well from that festival season, on to about the day sacred to a class of persons who will never read our Recreations.

Of all the months of the year, November—in our climate—whether in town or country, bears the worst character. He is almost universally thought to be a sour, sulky, sullen, savage, dim, dull, dark, disconsolate, yet designing month—in fewer words, a month scarcely fit to live. Abhorring all personalities, we repent having sometimes given into this national abuse of November. We know him well—and though we admit at once that he is no beauty, and that his manners are at the best bluff, at the worst repulsive, yet on those who choose to cultivate his acquaintance, his character continues so to mellow and ameliorate itself, that they come at last, if not to love, to like him, and even to prefer his company “in the season of the year,” to that of other more brilliant visitors. So true is it with months and men, that it requires only to know the most unpleasant of them, and to see them during a favourable phasis, in order to regard them with that Christian complacency which a good heart sheds over all its habits. ’Tis unlucky for November—poor fellow!—that he follows October. October is a month so much

admired by the world, that we often wonder he has not been spoiled. "What a glorious October!" "Why, you will surely not leave us till October comes!" "October is the month of all months—and, till you see him, you have not seen the Lakes." We acknowledge his claims. He is often truly delightful; but, like other brilliant persons, thinks himself not only privileged to be at times extremely dull, but his intensest stupidity is panegyricized as wit of the first water—while his not unfrequent rudeness, of which many a common month would be ashamed, passes for the ease of high-birth, or the eccentricity of genius. A very different feeling indeed exists towards unfortunate November. The moment he shows his face, all other faces are glum. We defy month or man, under such a trial, to make himself even tolerably agreeable. He feels that he is no favourite, and that a most sinister misinterpretation will be put on all his motions, manners, thoughts, words, and deeds. A man or a month so circumstanced is much to be pitied. Think, look, speak, act as he will—yea, even more like an angel than a man or a month—every eyebrow arches—every nostril distends—every lip curls towards him in contempt, while blow over the ice that enchains all his feelings and faculties, heavy-chill whisperings of "who is that disagreeable fellow?" In such a frozen atmosphere eloquence would be congealed on the lips of an Ulysses—Poetry prosified on those of an Apollo.

Edinburgh, during the dead of Summer, is a far more solitary place than Glenetive, Glen-evis, or Glenco. There is not, however, so much danger of being lost in it as in the Moor of Rannoch—for streets and squares, though then utterly tenantless, are useful as landmarks to the pilgrim passing through what seems to be

"A still forsaken City of the Dead!"

But, like a frost-bound river, suddenly dissolved by a strong thaw, and coming down in spate from the mountains to the low lands, about the beginning of November Life annually overflows our metropolis, with a noise like "the rushing of many chariots." The streets, that for months had been like the stony channels of dried-up streams—only not quite so well paved—are again all a murmur, and people addicted to the study of political economy, begin to hold

"Each strange tale devoutly true"

in the Malthusian theory of population. What swarms keep hovering round the great Northern Hive! Add eke after eke to the skep, and still seems it too small to contain all the insects. Edinburgh is almost as large as London. Nay, don't stare! We speak comparatively; and, as England is somewhere about six times more populous than Scotland, you may, by brushing up your arithmetic, and applying to the Census, discover that we are not so far wrong in our apparent paradox.

Were November in himself a far more wearifu' month than he is, Edinburgh would nevertheless be gladsome in the midst of all his gloom, even as a wood in May with the Gathering of the Clans. The country flows

into the town—all its life seems to do so—and to leave nothing behind but the bare trees and hedges. Equipages again go glittering along all the streets, squares, circuses, and crescents; and one might think that the entire "nation of ladies and gentlemen"—for King George the Fourth, we presume, meant to include the sex, in his compliment—were moving through their metropolis. Amusement and business walk hand-in-hand—you hardly know, from their cheerful countenances, which is which; for the Scots, though a high-cheeked, are not an ill-favoured folk in their features—and though their mouths are somewhat of the widest, their teeth are white as well as sharp, and on the opening of their ruddy lips, their ivory-cases are still further brightened by hearty smiles. 'Twould be false to say that their figures are distinguished by an air of fashion—for we have no court, and our nobles are almost all absentees. But though, in one sense, the men are ugly customers, as they will find

"Who chance to tread upon their freeborn toe,"

yet, literally, they are a comely crew, and if formed into battalions in marching order, would make the National Guard in Paris look like

"That small infantry
Warr'd on by cranes."

Our females have figures that can thaw any frost; and 'tis universally allowed that they walk well, though their style of pedestrianism does not so readily recall to the imagination Virgil's picture of Camilla flying along the heads of corn without touching their ears, as the images of paviors with post-looking mallets driving down dislodged stones into the streets. Intermingling with the lighter and more elastic footsteps of your Southron dames, the on-goings of our native virgins produce a pleasant variety of motion in the forenoon *mêlée* that along the Street of Princes now goes nodding in the sun-glint.

"Amid the general dance and minstrelsy"

who would wear a long face, unless it were in sympathy with his length of ears! A din of multitudinous joy hums in the air; you cannot see the city for the houses, its inhabitants for the people; and, as for finding one particular acquaintance in the crowd, why, to use an elegant simile, you might as well go search for a needle in a bottle of hay.

But hark! a hollow sound, distant, and as yet referred to no distinct place—then a faint mixture of a clear chime that is almost music—now a tune—and at last, rousing the massy multitude to enthusiasm, a military march, swelling various, profound, and high, with drum, trombone, serpent, trump, clarionet, fife, flute, and cymbal, bringing slowly on (is it the measured tramp of the feet of men, or the confused trampling of horses!) banners floating over the procession, above the glitter of steel, and the golden glow of helmets. 'Tis a regiment of cavalry—hurra! the Carbineers! What an Advanced Guard!

"There England sends her men, of men the chief,"

still, staid, bold, bronzed faces, with keen eyes, looking straight forward from between sabres; while beneath the equable but haughty motion

of their steeds, almost disciplined as their riders, with long black horse-hair flowing in martial majesty, nod their high Roman casques. The sweet storm of music has been passing by while we were gazing, and is now somewhat deadened by the retiring distance and by that mass of buildings, (how the windows are alive, and agaze with faces!) while troop after troop comes on, still moving, it is felt by all, to the motion of the warlike tune, though now across the Waterloo Bridge sounding like an echo, till the glorious war-pageant is all gone by, and the dull day is deadened down again into the stillness and silence of an ignoble peace.

"Now all the youth of Scotland are on fire!"

All her cities and towns are rejoicing in the welcome Winter; and mind, invigorated by holidays, is now at work, like a giant refreshed, in all professions. The busy bar growls, grumphs, squeaks, like an old sow with a litter of pigs pretending to be quarrelling about straws. Enter the Outer or the Inner House, and you hear eloquence that would have put Cicero to the blush, and reduced Demosthenes to his original stutter. The wigs of the Judges seem to have been growing during the long vacation, and to have expanded into an ampler wisdom. Seldom have we seen a more solemn set of men. Every one looks more *gash* than another, and those three in the centre seem to us the embodied spirits of Law, Equity, and Justice. What can be the meaning of all this endless litigation? On what immutable principles in human nature depends the prosperity of the Fee-fund? Life is strife. Inestimable the blessing of the great institution of Property! For without it, how could people go together by the ears, as if they would tear one another to pieces? All the strong, we must not call them bad passions, denied their natural element, would find out some channels to run in, far more destructive to the commonweal than lawsuits, and the people would be reduced to the lowest ebb of misery, and raised to the highest flow of crime. Our Parliament House here is a vast safety-valve for the escape of the foul steam that would otherwise explode and shatter the engine of the state, blowing the body and members of society to smash. As it is, how the engine works! There it goes! like Erickson's Novelty or Stevenson's Rocket along a railroad; and though an accident may occur now and then, such as an occasional passenger chucked by some uncalculated collision into the distant horizon, to be picked up whole, or in fragments, by the hoers in some turnip-field in the adjacent county, yet few or none are likely to be fatal on a great scale; and on goes the Novelty or Rocket, like a thought, with many weighty considerations after it, in the shape of wagons of Christians or cottons, while Manufactures and Commerce exult in the cause of Liberty and Locomotion all over the world.

But to us utter idlesse is perfect bliss. And why? Because, like a lull at sea, or *loun* on land, it is felt to descend from Heaven on man's toilsome lot. The lull and the loun, what are they when most profound, but the transient cessation of the restlessness of winds and wa-

ters—a change wrought for an hour of peace in the heart of the hurricane! Therefore the sailor enjoys it on the green wave—the shepherd on the green sward; while the memory of mists and storms deepens the enchantment. Even so, Idlesse can be enjoyed but by those who are permitted to indulge it, while enduring the labours of an active or a contemplative life. To use another, and a still livelier image—see the pedlar toiling along the dusty road, with an enormous pack on his excursion; and when off his aching shoulders slowly falls back on the bank the loosened load, in blessed relief think ye not that he enjoys, like a very poet, the beauty of the butterflies that, wavering through the air, settle down on the wild-flowers around him that embroider the wayside! Yet our pedlar is not so much either of an entomologist or a botanist as not to take out his scrip, and eat his bread and cheese with a mute prayer and a munching appetite—not idle, it must be confess'd, in that sense—but in every other idle even as the shadow of the sycamore, beneath which, with his eyes half-open—for by hypothesis he is a Scotsman—he finally sinks into a wakeful, but quiet half-sleep. "Hallo! why are you sleeping there, you *idle* fellow?" bawls some beadle, or some overseer, or some magistrate, or perhaps merely one of those private persons who, out of season and in season, are constantly sending the sluggard to the ant to learn wisdom—though the ant, Heaven bless her! at proper times sleeps as sound as a sicknurse.

We are now the idlest, because once were we the most industrious of men. Up to the time that we engaged to take an occasional glance over the self-growing sheets of *The Periodical*, we were tied to one of the oars that move along the great vessel of life; and we believe that it was allowed by all the best watermen, that

"We feather'd our oars with skill and dexterity."

But ever since we became an Editor, our repose, bodily and mental, has been like that of a Hindoo god. Often do we sit whole winter nights, leaning back on our chair, more like the image of a man than a man himself, with shut eyes, that keep seeing in succession all the things that ever happened to us, and all the persons that we ever loved, hated, or despised, embraced, beat, or insulted, since we were a little boy. They too have all an image-like appearance, and 'tis wondrous strange how silent they all are, actors and actresses on the stage of that revived drama, which sometimes seems to be a genteel comedy, and sometimes a broad farce, and then to undergo dreadful transfiguration into a tragedy deep as death.

We presume that the Public read in her own papers—we cannot but be hurt that no account of it has appeared in the *Court Journal*—that on Thursday the 12th current, No. 99, Moray Place, was illuminated by our annual *Soirée, Conversazione, Rout, Ball, and Supper*. A Ball! yes—for Christopher North, acting in the spirit of his favourite James Thomson,

"No purpose gay,
Amusement, dance, or song he sternly scans
For happiness and true philosophy
Are of the social, still, and smiling kind."

All the rooms in the house were thrown open, except the cellars and the Sanctum. To the people congregated outside, the building, we have been assured, had all the brilliancy of the Bude Light. It was like a palace of light, of which the framework or skeleton was of white unveined marble. So strong was the reflection on the nocturnal heavens, that a rumour ran through the City that there was a great fire in Moray Place, nor did it subside till after the arrival and departure of several engines. The alarm of some huge conflagration prevailed during most part of the night all over the kingdom of Fife; while in the Lothians, our illumination was much admired as an uncommonly fine specimen of the Aurora Borealis.

"From the arch'd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring enter'd."

We need not say who received the company, and with what grace she did so, standing at the first landing-place of the great staircase in sable stole; for the widow's weeds have not yet been doffed for the robes of saffron—with a Queen-Mary cap pointed in the front of her serene and ample forehead, and, to please us, a few pearls sprinkled among her hair, still an unfaded auburn, and on her bosom one star-bright diamond. Had the old General himself come to life again, and beheld her then and there, he could not have been offended with such simple ornaments. The weeds he would have felt due to him, and all that his memory was fairly entitled to; but the flowers—to speak figuratively—he would have cheerfully acknowledged were due to us, and that they well became both face and figure of his lovely relict. As she moved from one room to another, showering around her serene smiles, we felt the dignity of those Virgilian words,

"Incedit Regina."

Surely there is something very poetical in the gradual flowing in of the tide of grace, elegance and beauty, over the floors of a suit of regal-looking rooms, splendidly illuminated. Each party as it comes on has its own peculiar picturesqueness, and affects the heart or imagination by some novel charm, gently gliding onward a little while by itself, as if not unconscious of its own attractions, nor unproud of the gaze of perhaps critical admiration that attends its progressive movement. We confess ourselves partial to plumes of feathers above the radiant braidings of the silken tresses on the heads of virgins and matrons—provided they be not "dumpy women"—tall, white, blue, and pink plumes, silent in their wavings as gossamer, and as finely delicate, stirred up by your very breath as you bend down to salute their cheeks—not with kisses—for they would be out of order both of time and place—but with words almost as tender as kisses, and awakening almost as tender a return—a few sweet syllables breathed in a silver voice, with blushing cheeks, and down-cast eyes that, when again uplifted, are seen to be from heaven.

A long hour ago, and all the mansion was

empty and motionless—with us two alone sitting by each other's side affectionately and respectfully on a sofa. Now it is filled with life, and heard you ever such a happy murmur? Yet no one in particular looks as if he or she were speaking much above breath, so gentle is true refinement, like a delightful fragrance

"From the calm manners quietly exhaled."

Oh! the atrocious wickedness of a great, big, hearty, huge, hulking, horse-laugh in an assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, gathered gracefully together to enjoy the courtesies, the amenities, the urbanities, and the humanities of cultivated Christian life! The pagan who perpetrates it should be burnt alive—not at a slow fire—though that would be but justice—but at a quick one, that all remnants of him and his enormity may be instantly extinguished. Lord Chesterfield has been loudly laughed at with leathern lungs for his anathema against laughter. But though often wrong, there his Lordship was right, and for that one single rule of manners he deserves a monument, as having been one of the benefactors of his species. Let smiles mantle—and that sweet, soft, low sound be heard, the *susurrus*. Let there be a many-voiced quiet music, like that of the summer moonlight sea when the stars are in its breast. But laughter—loud peals of laughter—are like breakers—blind breakers on a blind coast, where no verdure grows except that of tangle, and whatever is made into that vulgarist of all commodities, kelp.

'Tis not a literary conversazione, mind ye, gentle reader; for we leave that to S. T. Coleridge, the Monarch of the Monologue. But all speak—talk—whisper—or smile, of all the speakable, talkable, whisperable, and smileable little interesting affairs, incidents, and occurrences, real or fabulous, of public, private, demi-public, or demi-semi-private life. Topics are as plentiful as snow-flakes, and melt away as fast in the stream of social pleasure,

"A moment white, then gone for ever!"

Not a little scandal—much gossip, we dare say; but as for scandal, it is the vulgarest error in the world to think that it either means, or does, any harm to any mortal. It does infinite good. It ventilates the atmosphere, and prevents the "golden-fretted vault" from becoming "a foul congregation of vapours." As for gossip, what other vindication does it need, than an order for you to look at a soirée of swallows in September on a slate-roof, the most innocent and white-breasted creatures that pay

"Their annual visits round the globe,
Companions of the sun,"

but such gossipers that the whole air is a-twitter with their talk about their neighbours' nests—when—whew! off and away they go, winnowing their way westwards, through the setting sunlight, and all in perfect amity with themselves and their kind, while

"The world is all before them where to choose,
And Providence their guide."

And, madam, you do not matronize—and, sir, you do not patronize—*waltzing*? 'Tis very O

fiè-fleish, you think—and in danger of becoming very, very faux-pa-pa-ish!

"Oh! the great goodness of the knights of old," whose mind-motto was still—

"*Honi soit qui mal y pense!*"

Judging by ourselves, 'tis a wicked world we unwillingly confess; but be not terrified at trifles, we beseech you, and be not gross in your censure of innocent and delicate delights. Byron's exquisitely sensitive modesty was shocked by the sight of waltzing, which he would not have suffered the Guiccioli, while she was in his keeping, to have indulged in even with her own husband. Thus it is that sinners see sin only where it is not—and shut their eyes to it when it comes upon them open-armed, bare-bosomed, and brazen-faced, and clutches them in a grasp more like the hug of a bear than the embrace of a woman. Away with such mawkish modesty and mouthing morality—for 'tis the slang of the hypocrite. Waltzing does our old eyes good to look on it, when the whole Circling Flight goes gracefully and airily on its orbit, and we think we see the realization of that picture (we are sad misquoters) when the Hours—

"Knit by the Graces and the Loves in dance,
Lead on the eternal spring!"

But the Circling Flight breaks into airy fragments, the Instrumental Band is hushed, and so is the whole central Drawing-room; for, blushing obedient to the old man's beck, *THE STAR OF EVE*—so call we her who is our heart's-ease and heart's-delight—the granddaughter of one whom hopelessly we loved in youth, yet with no unreturned passion—but

"The course of true love never yet ran smooth"—comes glidingly to our side, and having heard our wish breathed whisperingly into her ear—a rare feature when small, thin, and delicate as a leaf—just as glidingly she goes, in stature that is almost stateliness, towards her Harp, and assuming at once a posture that would have charmed Canova, after a few prelusive touches that betray the hand of a mistress in the divine art, to the enchantment of the white motions of those graceful arms and fingers fine, awakes a spirit in the strings accordant to the spirit in that voice worthy to have blended with St. Cecilia's in her hymning orisons. A

Hebrew Melody! And now your heart feels the utter mournfulness of these words,

"By Babel's streams we sat and wept!"

How sudden, yet how unviolent, the transitions among all our feelings! Under no other power so swift and so soft as that of Music. The soul that sincerely loves Music, offers at no time the slightest resistance to her sway, but yields itself up entire to all its moods and measures, led captive by each successive strain through the whole mysterious world of modulated air. Not a smile over all that hush. Entranced in listening, they are all still as images. A sigh—almost a sob—is heard, and there is shedding of tears. The sweet singer's self seems as if she felt all alone at some solitary shrine—

"Her face, oh! call it fair, not pale!"

Yet pale now it is, as if her heart almost died within her at the pathos of her own beautiful lament in a foreign land, and lovelier in her captivity never was the fairest of the daughters of Zion!

How it howls! That was a very avalanche. The snow-winds preach charity to all who have roofs over-head—towards the houseless and them who huddle round hearths where the fire is dying or dead. Those blankets must have been a Godsend indeed to not a few families, and your plan is preferable to a Fancy-Fair. Yet that is good too—nor do we find fault with them who dance for the Destitute. We sanction amusements that give relief to misery—and the wealthy may waltz unblamed for behoof of the poor.

Again what a howling in the chimney! What a blattering on the windows, and what a cannonading on the battlements! What can the Night be about? and what has put old Nox into such a most outrageous passion? He has driven our Winter Rhapsody clean out of our noddle—and to-morrow we must be sending for the slater, the plumber, and the glazier. To go to bed in such a hurly-burly, would be to make an Ultra-Toryish acknowledgment, not only of the divine right, but of the divine power, of King Morpheus. But an Ultra-Tory we are not—though Ultra-Trimmers try to impose upon themselves that fiction among a thousand others; so we shall smoke a cigar, and let sleep go to the dogs, the deuse, the devil, and the Chartists.

STROLL TO GRASSMERE.

FIRST SAUNTER.

COMPANION of the Crutch! hast thou been a loving observer of the weather of our island-clime? We do not mean to ask if you have from youth been in the daily practice of rising from your study-chair at regular intervals, and ascertaining the precise point of Mercury's elevation on the barometrical scale. The idea of trusting, throughout all the fluctuations of the changeful and capricious atmosphere in which we live, to quicksilver, is indeed preposterous; and we have long noticed that meteorologists make an early figure in our obituaries. Seeing the head of the god above the mark "fair," or "settled," out they march in thins, without great-coat or umbrella, when such a thunder-plump falls down in a deluge, that, returning home by water and steam, they take to bed, and on the ninth day fever hurries them off, victims to their confidence in that treacherous tube. But we mean to ask, have you an eye, an ear, and a sixth sense, anonymous and instinctive, for all the prognosticating sights and sounds, and motions and shapes, of nature? Have you studied, in silence and solitude, the low, strange, and spirit-like whisperings, that often, when bird and bee are mute, come and go, here and there, now from crag, now from coppice, and now from moor, all over the sultry stillness of the clouded landscape? Have you listened among mountains to the voice of streams, till you heard them prophesying change? Have you so mastered the occult science of mists, as that you can foretell each proud or fair Emergency, and the hour when grove, precipice, or plain, shall in sudden revelation be clothed with the pomp of sunshine? Are all Bewick's birds, and beasts, and fishes visible to your eyes in the woods, wastes, and waves of the clouds? And know ye what aerial condor, dragon, and whale, respectively portend? Are the Fata Morgana as familiar to you as the Aberdeen Almanac! When a mile-square hover of crows darkens air and earth, or settling loads every tree with sable fruitage, are you your own augur, equally as when one raven lifts up his hoary blackness from a stone, and sails sullenly off with a croak, that gets fiercer and more savage in the lofty distance? Does the leaf of the forest twinkle futurity? the lonely lichen brighten or pale its lustre with change? Does not the gift of prophecy dwell with the family of the violets and the lilies? The prescient harebells, do they not let drop their closing blossoms when the heavens are niggard of their dews, or uphold them like cups thirsty for wine, when the blessing, yet unfelt by duller animal life, is beginning to drop balmily down from the rainy cloud embosomed in the blue of a midsummer's meridian day?

Forgive these friendly interrogatories. Perhaps you are weather-wiser than ourselves;

yet for not a few years we bore the name of "The Man of the Mountains;" and, though no great linguists, we hope that we know somewhat more than the vocabulary of the languages of calm and storm. Remember that we are now at Ambleside—and one week's residence there may let you into some of the secrets of the unsteady Cabinet of St. Cloud.

One advice we give you, and by following it you cannot fail to be happy at Ambleside, and everywhere else. Whatever the weather be, love, admire, and delight in it, and vow that you would not change it for the atmosphere of a dream. If it be close, hot, oppressive, be thankful for the faint air that comes down fitfully from cliff and chasm, or the breeze that ever and anon gushes from stream and lake. If the heavens are filled with sunshine, and you feel the vanity of parasols, how cool the silvan shade for ever moistened by the murmurs of that fairy waterfall! Should it blow great guns, cannot you take shelter in yonder magnificent fort, whose hanging battlements are warded even from the thunder-bolt by the dense umbrage of unviolated woods? Rain—rain—rain—an even-down pour of rain, that forces upon you visions of Noah and his ark, and the top of Mount Ararat—still, we beseech you, be happy. It cannot last long at that rate; the thing is impossible. Even this very afternoon will the rainbow span the blue entrance into Rydal's woody vale, as if to hail the western sun on his approach to the mountains—and a hundred hill-born torrents will be seen flashing out of the up-folding mists. What a delightful dazzle on the light-stricken river! Each meadow shames the lustre of the emerald; and the soul wishes not for language to speak the pomp and prodigality of colours that Heaven now rejoices to lavish on the grove-girdled Fairfield, who has just tossed off the clouds from his rocky crest.

You will not imagine, from any thing we have ever said, that we are enemies to early rising. Now and then, what purer bliss than to embrace the new-wakened Morn, just as she is rising from her dewy bed! At such hour, we feel as if there were neither, physical nor moral evil in the world. The united power of peace, innocence, and beauty subdues every thing to itself, and life is love.

Forgive us, loveliest of Mornings! for having overslept the assignation hour, and allowed thee to remain all by thyself in the solitude, wondering why thy worshipper could prefer to thy presence the fairest phantoms that ever visited a dream. And thou hast forgiven us—for not clouds of displeasure these that have settled on thy forehead; the unrepenting light of thy countenance is upon us—a loving murmur steals into our heart from thine—and pure as a child's, daughter of Heaven! is thy breath.

In the spirit of that invocation we look

around us, and as the idea of morning dies, sufficient for our happiness is "the light of common day"—the imagery of common earth. There has been rain during the night—enough, and no more, to enliven nature—the mists are ascending comely with promise of gentle weather—and the sun, so mild that we can look him in the face with unwinking eyes, gives assurance that as he has risen so will he reign, and so will he set in peace.

Yet we cannot help thinking it somewhat remarkable, that, to the best of our memory, never once were we the very first into the dawn. We say nothing of birds—for they, with their sweet jargoning, anticipate it, and from their bed on the bough feel the forerunning warmth of the sunrise; neither do we allude to hares, for they are "hirpling hame," to sleep away the light hours, open-eyed, in the briery quarry in the centre of the trackless wood. Even cows and horses we can excuse being up before us, for they have bivouacked; and the latter, as they often sleep standing, are naturally somnambulists. Weasels, too, we can pardon for running across the road before us, and as they reach the hole-in-the-wall, showing by their clear eyes that they have been awake for hours, and have probably breakfasted on leveret. We have no spite at chanticleer, nor the hooting owls against whom he is so lustily crowing hours before the orient; nor do we care although we know that is not the first sudden plunge of the tyrant trout into the insect cloud already hovering over the tarn. But we confess that it is a little mortifying to our pride of time and place, to meet an old beggar-woman, who from the dust on her tattered brogues has evidently marched miles from her last night's wayside howf, and who holds out her withered palm for charity, at an hour when a cripple of fourscore might have been supposed sleeping on her pallet of straw. A pedlar, too, who has got through a portion of the Excursion before the sun has illumed the mountain-tops, is mortifying, with his piled pack and ellwand. There, as we are a Christian, is Ned Hurd, landing a pike on the margin of the Reed-pool, on his way from Hayswater, where he has been all night angling, till his creel is as heavy as a sermon; and a little further on, comes issuing like a Dryad's daughter, from the gate in the lane, sweet, little Alice Elleray, with a basket dangling beneath her arm, going in her orphan beauty to gather, in their season, wild strawberries or violets in the woods.

Sweet orphan of Wood-edge! what would many a childless pair give for a creature one-half so beautiful as thou, to break the stillness of a home that wants but one blessing to make it perfectly happy! Yet there are few or none to lay a hand on that golden head, or leave a kiss upon its ringlets. The father of Alice Elleray was a wild and reckless youth, and, going to the wars, died in a foreign land. Her mother soon faded away of a broken heart;—and who was to care for the orphan child of the forgotten friendless? An old pauper who lives in that hut, scarcely distinguishable from the sheelings of the charcoal-burners, was glad to take her from the parish for a weekly mite

that helps to eke out her own subsistence. For two or three years the child was felt a burden by the solitary widow; but ere she had reached her fifth summer, Alice Elleray never left the hut without darkness seeming to overshadow it—never entered the door without bringing the sunshine. Where can the small, lonely creature have heard so many tunes, and airs, and snatches of old songs—as if some fairy bird had taught her melodies of fairy-land? She is now in her tenth year, nor an idler in her solitude. Do you wish for a flowery bracelet for the neck of a chosen one, whose perfumes may mingle with the bosom-balm of her virgin beauty? The orphan of Wood-edge will wreath it of blossoms cropt before the sun hath melted the dew on leaf or petal. Will you be for carrying away with you to the far-off city some pretty little silvan toy, to remind you of Ambleside, and Rydal, and other beautiful names of beautiful localities near the lucid waters of Windermere? Then, Lady! purchase, at little cost, from the fair basket-maker, an ornament for your parlour, that will not disgrace its fanciful furniture, and, as you sit at your dreamy needlework, will recall the green forest-glades of Brathay or Calgarth. Industrious creature! each day is to thee, in thy simplicity, an entire life. All thoughts, all feelings, arise and die in peace between sunrise and sunset. What carest thou for being an orphan! knowing, as thou well dost, that God is thy father and thy mother, and that a prayer to Him brings health, food, and sleep to the innocent.

Letting drop a curtsy, taught by Nature, the mother of the Graces, Alice Elleray, the orphan of Wood-edge, without waiting to be twice bidden, trills, as if from a silver pipe, a wild, bird-like warble, that in its cheerfulness has now and then a melancholy fall, and, at the close of the song, hers are the only eyes that are not dimmed with the haze of tears. Then away she glides with a thankful smile, and dancing over the greensward, like an uncertain sunbeam, lays the treasure, won by her beauty, her skill, and her industry, on the lap of her old guardian, who blesses her with the uplifting of withered hands.

Meanwhile, we request you to walk away with us up to Stockgill-force. There has been a new series of dry weather, to be sure; but to our liking, a waterfall is best in a rainless summer. After a flood, the noise is beyond all endurance. You get stunned and stupified till your head splits. Then you may open your mouth like a barn-door—we are speaking to you, sir—and roar into a friend's ear all in vain a remark on the cataract. To him you are a dumb man. In two minutes you are as completely drenched in spray as if you had fallen out of a boat—and descend to dinner with a toothache that keeps you in starvation in the presence of provender sufficient for a whole bench of bishops. In dry weather, on the contrary, the waterfall is in moderation; and instead of tumbling over the cliff in a perpetual peal of thunder, why, it slides and slides merrily and musically away down the green shelving rocks, and sinks into repose in many a dim or lucid pool, amidst whose foam-bells is playing or asleep the fearless Naiad.

Deuse a headache have you—speak in a whisper, and not a syllable of your excellent observation is lost; your coat is dry, except that a few dewdrops have been shook over you from the branches stirred by the sudden wing-clap of the cushat—and as for toothache interfering with dinner, you eat as if your tusks had been just sharpened, and would not scruple to discuss nuts, upper-and-lower-jaw-work fashion, against the best crackers in the county. And all this comes of looking at Stockgill-force, or any other waterfall, in dry weather, after a few refreshing and fertilizing showers that make the tributary rills to murmur, and set at work a thousand additional feeders to every Lake.

Ha! Matutine Roses!—budding, half-blown, consummate—you are, indeed, in irresistible blush! We shall not say which of you we love best—*she knows it*; but we see there is no hope to-day for the old man—for you are all paired—and he must trudge it *solus*, in capacity of Guide-General of the Forces. What! the nymphs are going to pony it? And you intend, you selfish fellows, that we shall hold all the reins whenever the spirit moveth you to deviate from bridle-path, to clamber cliff for a bird's-eye view, or dive into dells for some rare plant! Well, well—there is a tradition, that once we were young ourselves; and so redolent of youth are these hills, that we are more than half inclined to believe it—so blush and titter, and laugh and look down, ye innocent wicked ones, each with her squire by her palfrey's name, while good old Christopher, like a true guide, keeps hobbling in the rear on his Crutch. Holla there!—to the right of our friend Mr. Benson's smithy—and to Rothay-bridge. Turn in at a gate to the right hand, which, twenty to one, you will find open, that the cattle may take an occasional promenade along the turnpike, and cool their palates with a little ditch grass, and saunter along by Millar-bridge and Foxgill on to Pelter-bridge, and, if you please, to Rydal-mere. Thus, and thus only, is seen the vale of Ambleside; and what a vale of grove, and glade, and stream, and cliff, and cottage, and villa, and grass-field, and garden, and orchard, and—But not another word, for you would forthwith compare our description with the reality, and seeing it faint and feeble, would toss it into the Rothay, and laugh as the Vol. plumped over a waterfall!

The silvan—or say rather the forest scenery—(for there is to us an indescribable difference between these two words)—of Rydal-park, was, in memory of living men, magnificent, and it still contains a treasure of old trees. Lady Diana's white pea-fowl, sitting on the limbs of that huge old tree like creatures newly alighted from the Isles of Paradise! all undisturbed by the water-falls, which, as you keep gazing on the long-depending plumage illumining the forest-gloom, seem indeed to lose their sound, and to partake the peace of that resplendent show—each splendour a wondrous Bird! For they stretch themselves all up, with their graceful crests, o'er-canopied by the umbrage draped as from a throne. And never surely were seen in this daylight world such un terrestrial creatures—though come

from afar, all happy as at home in the Fairies' Oak.

By all means ride away into these woods, and lose yourselves for half an hour among the cooing of cushats, and the shrill shriek of startled blackbirds, and the rustle of the harmless slow-worm among the last year's red beech-leaves. No very great harm in a kiss under the shadow of an oak, (oh fie!) while the magpie chatters angrily at safe distance, and the more innocent squirrel peeps down upon you from a bough of the canopy, and, hoisting his tail, glides into the obscurity of the loftiest umbrage. You still continue to see and hear; but the sight is a glimmer, and the sound a hum, as if the forest-glade were swarming with bees, from the ground-flowers to the herons' nests. Refreshed by your dream of Dryads, follow a lonesome din that issues from a pile of wooded cliffs, and you are led to a Water-fall. Five minutes are enough for taking an impression, if your mind be of the right material, and you carry it away with you further down the Forest. Such a torrent will not reach the lake without disporting itself into many little cataracts; and saw ye ever such a fairy one as that flowing through below an ivied bridge into a circular basin overshadowed by the uncertain twilight of many checkering branches, and washing the rock-base of a Hermitage, in which a sin-sickened, or pleasure-palled man might, before his hairs were gray, forget all the gratifications and all the guilt of the noisy world?

You are now all standing together in a group beside Ivy-cottage, the river gliding below its wooden bridge from Rydal-mere. It is a perfect model of such architecture—breathing the very spirit of Westmoreland. The public road, skirted by its front paling, does not in the least degree injure its character of privacy and retirement; so we think at this dewy hour of prime, when the gossamer meets our faces, extended from the honeysuckled slate-porch to the trees on the other side of the turnpike. And see how the multitude of low-hanging roofs and gable-ends, and dove-cot looking windows, steal away up a green and shrubberied acclivity, and terminating in wooded rocks that seem part of the building, in the uniting richness of ivy, lichens, moss-roses, broom, and sweet-brier, murmuring with birds and bees, busy near hive and nest! It would be extremely pleasant to breakfast in that deep-windowed room on the ground-floor, on cream and barley-cakes, eggs, coffee, and dry-toast, with a little mutton-ham not too severely salted, and at the conclusion, a nut-shell of Glenlivet or Cogniac. But, Lord preserve ye! it is not yet six o'clock in the morning; and what Christian kettle simmereth before seven? Yes, my sweet Harriet, that sketch does you credit, and it is far from being very unlike the original. Rather too many chimneys by about half-a-dozen; and where did you find that steeple immediately over the window marked "Dairy"? The pigs are somewhat too sumptuously lodged in that elegant sty, and the hen roost might accommodate a phoenix. But the features of the chief porch are very happily hit off—you have caught the very attic spirit of the roof—and

some of the windows may be justly said to be staring likenesses.—Ivy-cottage is slipped into our portfolio, and we shall compare it, on our return to Scotland, with Buchanan Lodge.

Gallantry forbids, but Truth demands to say, that young ladies are but indifferent sketchers. The dear creatures have no notion of perspective. At flower-painting and embroidery, they are pretty fair hands, but they make sad work among waterfalls and ruins. Notwithstanding, it is pleasant to hang over them, seated on a stone or stool, drawing from nature; and now and then to help them in with a horse or a hermit. It is difficult, almost an impossible thing—that foreshortening. The most speculative genius is often at a loss to conjecture the species of a human being foreshortened by a young lady. The hanging Tower at Pisa is, we believe, some thirty feet or so off the perpendicular, and there is one at Caerphilly about seventeen; but these are nothing to the castles in the air we have seen built by the touch of a female magician; nor is it an unusual thing with artists of the fair sex to order their plumed chivalry to gallop down precipices considerably steeper than a house on animals apparently produced between the tiger and the bonassus. When they have succeeded in getting something like the appearance of water between what may be conjectured banks, they are not very particular about its running occasionally uphill; and it is interesting to see a stream stealing quietly below trees in gradual ascension, till, disappearing for a few minutes over one summit, it comes thundering down another, in the shape of a waterfall, on the head of an elderly gentleman, unsuspectingly reading Mr. Wordsworth's Excursion, perhaps, in the foreground. Nevertheless, we repeat, that it is delightful to hang over one of the dear creatures, seated on stone or stool, drawing from nature; for whatever may be the pencil's skill, the eye may behold the glimpse of a vision whose beauty shall be remembered when even Windermere herself has for a while faded into oblivion.

On such excursions there are sure to occur a few enviable adventures. First, the girths get wrong, and, without allowing your beloved virgin to alight, you spend more time than is absolutely necessary in arranging them; nor can you help admiring the attitude into which the graceful creature is forced to draw up her delicate limbs, that her fairy feet may not be in the way to impede your services. By and by, a calf—which you hope will be allowed to grow up into a cow—stretching up her curved red back from behind a wall, startles John Darby, albeit unused to the starting mood, and you leap four yards to the timely assistance of the fair shrieker, tenderly pressing her bridle-hand as you find the rein that has not been lost, and wonder what has become of the whip that never existed. A little further on, a bridgeless stream crosses the road—a dangerous-looking ford indeed—a foot deep at the very least, and scorning wet feet, as they ought to be scorned, you almost carry, serene in danger, your affianced bride (or she is in a fair way of becoming so) in your arms off the saddle, nor relinquish the delightful clasp till all

risk is at an end, some hundred yards on, along the velvet herbage. Next stream you come to has indeed a bridge—but then what a bridge! A long, coggly, cracked slate stone, whose unsteady clatter would make the soberest steed jump over the moon. You beseech the timid girl to sit fast, and she almost leans down to your breast as you press to meet the blessed burden, and to prevent the steady old stager from leaping over the battlements. But now the chasm on each side of the narrow path is so tremendous, that she must dismount, after due disentanglement, from that awkward, old-fashioned crutch and pummel, and from a stirrup, into which a little foot, when it has once crept like a mouse, finds itself caught as in a trap of singular construction, and difficult to open for release. You feel that all you love in the world is indeed fully, freshly, and warmly in your arms, nor can you bear to set the treasure down on the rough stony road, but look round, and round, and round, for a soft spot, which you finally prophesy at some distance up the hill, whitherwards, in spite of pouting Yea and Nay, you persist in carrying her whose head is ere long to lie in your tranquil bosom.

Ivy-cottage, you see, is the domicile of gentlemen and lady folk; but look through yonder dispersion, and in a minute or two your eyes will see distinctly, in spite of the trees, a *bonâ fide* farm-house, inhabited by a family whose head is at once an agriculturist, a shepherd, and a woodsman. A Westmoreland cottage has scarcely any resemblance to a Scottish one. A Scottish cottage (in the Lowlands) has rarely any picturesque beauty in itself—a narrow oblong, with steep thatched roof, and an ear-like chimney at each of the two gable-ends. Many of the Westmoreland cottages would seem, to an ignorant observer, to have been originally built on a model conceived by the finest poetical genius. In the first place, they are almost always built precisely where they ought to be, had the builder's prime object been to beautify the dale; at least, so we have often felt in moods, when perhaps our emotions were unconsciously soothed into complacency by the spirit of the scene. Where the sedgy brink of the lake or tarn circles into a lone bay, with a low hill of coppice-wood on one side, and a few tall pines on the other, no—it is a grove of sycamores—there, about a hundred yards from the water, and about ten above its ordinary level, peeps out from its cheerful seclusion that prettiest of all hamlets—Braithwaitefold. The hill behind is scarcely silvan—yet it has many hazels—a few bushes—here and there a holly—and why or wherefore, who can now tell, a grove of enormous yews. There is sweet pasturage among the rocks, and as you may suppose it a spring-day, mild without much sunshine, there is a bleating of lambs, a twitter of small birds, and the deep coo of the stock-dove. A wreath of smoke is always a feature of such a scene in description; but here there is now none, for probably the whole household are at work in the open air, and the fire, since fuel is not to be wasted, has been wisely suffered to expire on the hearth. No. There is a volume of smoke, as if the

chimney were in flame—a tumultuous cloud pours aloft, straggling and broken, through the broad slate stones that defend the mouth of the vomitory from every blast. The matron within is doubtless about to prepare breakfast, and last year's rotten pea-sticks have soon heated the capacious gridiron. Let the smoke-wreath melt away at its leisure, and do you admire, along with us, the infinite variety of all those little shelving and sloping roofs. To feel the full force of the peculiar beauty of these antique tenements, you must understand their domestic economy. If ignorant of that, you can have no conception of the meaning of any one thing you see—roofs, eaves, chimneys, beams, props, doors, hovels, and sheds, and hanging staircase, being all huddled together, as you think, in unintelligible confusion; whereas they are all precisely what and where they ought to be, and have had their colours painted, forms shaped, and places allotted by wind and weather, and the perpetually but pleasantly felt necessities of the natural condition of mountaineers.

Dear, dear is the thatch to the eyes of a son of Caledonia, for he may remember the house in which he was born; but what thatch was ever so beautiful as that slate from the quarry of the White-moss? Each one—no—not each one—but almost each one—of these little overhanging roofs seems to have been slated, or repaired at least, in its own separate season, so various is the lustre of lichens that bathes the whole, as richly as ever rock was bathed fronting the sun on the mountain's brow. Here and there is seen some small window, before unobserved, curtained perhaps—for the statesman, and the statesman's wife, and the statesman's daughters, have a taste—a taste inspired by domestic happiness, which, seeking simply comfort, unconsciously creates beauty, and whatever its homely hand touches, that it adorns. There would seem to be many fireplaces in Braithwaite-fold, from such a number of chimney-pillars, each rising up to a different altitude from a different base, round as the bole of a tree—and elegant, as if shaped by Vitruvius. To us, we confess, there is nothing offensive in the most glaring white rough-cast that ever changed a cottage into a patch of sunny snow. Yet here that grayish-tempered unobtrusive hue does certainly blend to perfection with roof, rock, and sky. Every instrument is in tune. Not even in silvan glade, nor among the mountain rocks, did wanderer's eyes ever behold a porch of meeting tree-stems, or reclining cliffs, more gracefully festooned, than the porch from which now issues one of the fairest of Westmeria's daughters. With one arm crossed before her eyes in a sudden burst of sunshine, with the other Ellinor Inman waves to her little brother and sisters among the bark-peelers in the Rydal woods. The graceful signal is repeated till seen, and in a few minutes a boat steals twinkling from the opposite side of the lake, each tug of the youthful rowers distinctly heard through the hollow of the vale. A singing voice rises and ceases—as if the singer were watching the echo—and is not now the picture complete?

After a time old buildings undergo no per-

ceptible change, any more than old trees; and after they have begun to feel the touch of decay, it is long before they look melancholy; for while they continue to be used, they cannot help looking cheerful, and even dilapidation is painful only when felt to be lifeless. The house now in ruins, that we passed a few hundred yards ago without you seeing it—we saw it with a sigh—among some dark firs, just before we began to ascend the hill, was many years ago inhabited by Miles Mackareth, a man of some substance, and universally esteemed for his honest and pious character. His integrity, however, wanted the grace of courteousness, and his religion was somewhat gloomy and austere, while all the habits of his life were sad, secluded, and solitary. His fire-side was always decent, but never cheerful—there the passing traveller partook of an ungrudging, but a grave hospitality; and although neighbours dropping in unasked were always treated as neighbours, yet seldom were they invited to pass an evening below his roof, except upon the stated festivals of the seasons, or some domestic event demanding sociality, according to the country custom. Year after year the gloom deepened on his strong-marked intellectual countenance; and his hair, once black as jet, became untimely gray. Indeed, although little more than fifty years old when you saw his head uncovered, you would have taken him for a man approaching to threescore and ten. His wife and only daughter, both naturally of a cheerful disposition, grew every year more retired, till at last they shunned society altogether, and were seldom seen but at church. And now a vague rumour ran through the hamlets of the neighbouring valleys, that he was scarcely in his right mind—that he had been heard by shepherds on the hills talking to himself wild words, and pacing up and down in a state of distraction. The family ceased to attend divine worship, and as for some time the Sabbath had been the only day they were visible, few or none now knew how they fared, and by many they were nearly forgotten. Meanwhile, during the whole summer, the miserable man haunted the loneliest places; and, to the terror of his wife and daughter, who had lost all power over him, and durst not speak, frequently passed whole days they knew not where, and came home, silent, haggard, and ghastly, about midnight. His widow afterwards told that he seldom slept, and never without dreadful dreams—that often would he sit up all night in his bed, with eyes fixed and staring on nothing, and uttering ejaculations for mercy for all his sins.

What these sins were he never confessed—nor, as far as man may judge of man, had he ever committed any act that needed to lie heavy on his conscience. But his whole being, he said, was one black sin—and a spirit had been sent to tell him, that his doom was to be with the wicked through all the ages of eternity. That spirit, without form or shadow—only a voice—seldom left his side day or night, go where he would; but its most dreadful haunt was under a steep rock called Blakeriggscaur; and thither, in whatever direction he turned his face on leaving his own

door, he was led by an irresistible impulse, even as a child is led by the hand. Tenderly and truly had he once loved his wife and daughter, nor less because that love had been of few words, and with a shade of sorrow. But now he looked on them almost as if they had been strangers—except at times, when he started up, kissed them, and wept. His whole soul was possessed by horrid fantasies, of which it was itself object and victim; and it is probable, that had he seen them both lying dead, he would have left their corpses in the house, and taken his way to the mountains. At last one night passed away and he came not. His wife and daughter, who had not gone to bed, went to the nearest house and told their tale. In an hour a hundred feet were traversing all the loneliest places—till a hat was seen floating on Loughrigg-tarn, and then all knew that the search was near an end. Drags were soon got from the fishermen on Windermere, and a boat crossed and recrossed the tarn on its miserable quest, till in an hour, during which wife and daughter sat without speaking on a stone by the water-edge, the body came floating to the surface, with its long silver hair. One single shriek only, it is said, was heard, and from that shriek till three years afterwards, his widow knew not that her husband was with the dead. On the brink of that small sandy bay the body was laid down and cleansed of the muddy weeds—his daughter's own hands assisting in the rueful work—and she walked among the mourners, the day before the Sabbath, when the funeral entered the little burial-ground of Langdale chapel, and the congregation sung a Christian psalm over the grave of the forgiven suicide.

We cannot patronize the practice of walking in large parties of ten or a score, ram-stam and helter-skelter, on to the front-green or gravel-walk of any private nobleman or gentleman's house, to enjoy, from a commanding station, an extensive or picturesque view of the circumjacent country. It is too much in the style of the Free and Easy. The family within, sitting perhaps at dinner with the windows open, or sewing and reading in a cool dishabille, cannot like to be stared in upon by so many curious and inquisitive pupils all a-hunt for prospects; nor were these rose-bushes planted there for public use, nor that cherry-tree in vain netted against the blackbirds. Not but that a party may now and then excusably enough pretend to lose their way in a strange country; and looking around them in well-assumed bewilderment, bow hesitatingly and respectfully to maid or matron at door or window, and, with a thousand apologies, lingeringly offer to retire by the avenue gate, on the other side of the spacious lawn, that terrace-like hangs over vale, lake, and river. But to avoid all possible imputation of impertinence, follow our example, and make all such incursions by break of day. We hold that, for a couple of hours before and after sunrise, all the earth is common property. Nobody surely would think for a moment of looking black on any number of freebooting lakers coming full sail up the avenue, right against the front, at four o'clock in the morning? At

that hour, even the poet would grant them the privilege of the arbour where he sits when inspired, and writing for immortality. He feels conscious that he ought to have been in bed; and hastens, on such occasions, to apologize for his intrusion on strangers availing themselves of the rights and privileges of the Dawn.

Leaving Ivy-cottage, then, and its yet unbreathing chimneys, turn in at the first gate to your right, (if it be not built up, in which case leap the wall,) and find your way the best you can through among old pollarded and ivyed ash-trees, intermingled with yews, and over knolly ground, brier-woven, and here and there whitened with the jagged thorn, till you reach, through a slate stile, a wide gravel walk, shaded by pine-trees, and open on the one side to an orchard. Proceed—and little more than a hundred steps will land you on the front of Rydal-mount, the house of the great Poet of the Lakes. Mr. Wordsworth is not at home, but away to cloud land in his little boat so like the crescent moon. But do not by too much eloquence awaken the family, or scare the silence, or frighten "the innocent brightness of the new-born day." We hate all sentimentalism; but we bid you, in his own words,

"With gentle hand
Touch, for there is a spirit in the leaves!"

From a quaint platform of evergreens you see a blue gleam of Windermere over the grovetops—close at hand are Rydal-hall and its ancient woods—right opposite the Loughrigg-fells, ferny, rocky, and silvan, but the chief breadth of breast pastoral—and to the right Rydal-mere, seen, and scarcely seen, through embowering trees, and mountain-masses bathed in the morning light, and the white-wreathed mists for a little while longer shrouding their summits. A lately erected private chapel lifts its little tower from below, surrounded by a green, on which there are yet no graves—nor do we know if it be intended for a place of burial. A few houses are sleeping beyond the chapel by the river side; and the people beginning to set them in order, here and there a pillar of smoke ascends into the air, giving cheerfulness and animation to the scene.

The Lake-Poets! ay, their day is come. The lakes are worthy of the poets, and the poets of the lakes. That poets should love and live among lakes, once seemed most absurd to critics whose domiciles were on the Nor-Loch, in which there was not sufficient water for a tolerable quagmire. Edinburgh Castle is a noble rock—so are the Salisbury Craigs noble craigs—and Arthur's Seat a noble lion couchant, who, were he to leap down on Auld Reekie, would break her back-bone and bury her in the Cowgate. But place them by Pavey-ark, or Red-scaur, or the glamour of Glaramara, and they would look about as magnificent as an upset pack of cards. Who, pray, are the Nor-Loch poets? Not the Minstrel—he holds by the tenure of the Tweed. Not Campbell—"he heard in dreams the music of the Clyde." Not Joanna Bailie—her inspiration was nursed on the Calder's silvan banks and the moors of Strathaven. Stream-loving Coila

nurtured Burns; and the Shepherd's grave is close to the cot in which he was born—within hearing of the Ettrick's mournful voice on its way to meet the Yarrow. Skiddlaw overshadows, and Greta freshens the bower of him who framed,

"Of Thalaba, the wild and wond'rous song."

Here the woods, mountains, and waters of Rydal imparadise the abode of the wisest of nature's bards, with whom poetry is religion. And where was he ever so happy as in that region, he who created "Christabelle," "beautiful exceedingly;" and sent the "Ancient Mariner" on the wildest of all voyagings, and brought him back with the ghastliest of all crews, and the strangest of all curses that ever haunted crime?

Of all Poets that ever lived, Wordsworth has been at once the most truthful and the most idealizing; external nature from him has received a soul, and becomes our teacher; while he has so filled our minds with images from her, that every mood finds some fine affinities there, and thus we all hang for sustenance and delight on the bosom of our mighty Mother. We believe that there are many who have an eye for Nature, and even a sense of the beautiful, without any very profound feeling; and to them Wordsworth's finest descriptive passages seem often languid or diffuse, and not to present to their eyes any distinct picture. Perhaps sometimes this objection may be just; but to paint to the eye is easier than to the imagination—and Wordsworth, taking it for granted that people can now see and hear, desires to make them feel and understand; of his pupil it must not be said,

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is nothing more;"

the poet gives the something more till we start at the disclosure as at a lovely apparition—yet an apparition of beauty not foreign to the flower, but exhaling from its petals, which till that moment seemed to us but an ordinary bunch of leaves. In these lines is an humbler example of how recondite may be the spirit of beauty in any most familiar thing belonging to the kingdom of nature; one higher far—but of the same kind—is couched in two immortal verses—

"To me the humblest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

In what would the poet differ from the worthy man of prose, if his imagination possessed not a beautifying and transmuting power over the objects of the inanimate world? Nay, even the naked truth itself is seen clearly but by poetic eyes; and were a sumph all at once to become a poet, he would all at once be stark-saring mad. Yonder ass licking his lips at a twistle, sees but water for him to drink in Windermere a-glow with the golden lights of setting suns. The ostler or the boots at Lowood-inn takes a somewhat higher flight, and for a moment, pausing with curry-comb or blacking-brush in his suspended hand, calls on Sally Chambermaid for gracious sake to look at Pull-wyke. The waiter who has cultivated his taste from conversation with Lakers, learns

their phraseology, and declares the sunset to be exceedingly handsome. The Laker, who sometimes has a soul, feels it rise within him as the rim of the orb disappears in the glow of softened fire. The artist compliments Nature, by likening her evening glories to a picture of Claud Lorraine—while the poet feels the sense sublime

"Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Compare any one page, or any twenty pages, with the character given of Wordsworth's poetry in the obsolete criticism that sought to send it to oblivion. The poet now sits on his throne in the blue serene—and no voice from below dares deny his supremacy in his own calm dominions. And was it of him, whose devout imagination, dreaming of ages to come now sees, placed in his immortality between Milton and Spenser, that the whole land once rang with ridicule, while her wise men wiped their eyes "of tears that sacred pity had engendered," and then relieved their hearts by joining in the laughter "of the universal British nation?" All the ineffable absurdities of the bard are now embodied in Seven Volumes—the sense of the ridiculous still survives among us—our men of wit and power are not all dead—we have yet our satirists, great and small—editors in thousands, and contributors in tens of thousands—yet not a whisper is heard to breathe detraction from the genius of the high-priest of nature; while the voice of the awakened and enlightened land declares it to be divine—using towards him not the language merely of admiration but of reverence—of love and gratitude, due to a benefactor of humanity, who has purified its passions by loftiest thoughts and noblest sentiments, stilling their turbulence by the same processes that magnify their power, and showing how the soul, in ebb and flow, and when its tide is at full, may be at once as strong and as serene as the sea.

There are few pictures painted by him merely for the pleasure of the eye, or even the imagination, though all the pictures he ever painted are beautiful to both; they have all a moral meaning—many a meaning more than moral—and his poetry can be comprehended, in its full scope and spirit, but by those who feel the sublimity of these four lines in his "Ode to Duty"—

"Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh
and strong."

Is thy life disturbed by guilty or sinful passions? Have they gained a mastery of thee—and art thou indeed their slave? Then the poetry of Wordsworth must be to thee

"As is a picture to a blind man's eye;"

or if thine eyes yet see the light in which it is enveloped, and thy heart yet feels the beauty it reveals, in spite of the clouds that overhang

and the storms that trouble them, that beauty will be unbearable, till regret become remorse, and remorse penitence, and penitence restore thee to those intuitions of the truth that illumine his sacred pages, and thou knowest and feelest once more that

"The primal duties that shine aloft—like stars,"

that life's best pleasures grow like flowers all around and beneath thy feet.

Nor are we not privileged to cherish a better feeling than pride in the belief, or rather knowledge, that We have helped to diffuse Wordsworth's poetry not only over this island, but the furthest dependencies of the British empire, and throughout the United States of America. Many thousands have owed to us their emancipation from the prejudices against it, under which they had wilfully remained ignorant of it during many years; and we have instructed as many more, whose hearts were free, how to look on it with those eyes of love which alone can discover the Beautiful. Communications have been made to us from across the Atlantic, and from the heart of India—from the Occident and the Orient—thanking us for having vindicated and extended the fame of the best of our living bards, till the name of Wordsworth has become a household word on the banks of the Mississippi and the Ganges. It would have been so had we never lived, *but not so soon*; and many a noble nature has worshipped his genius, as displayed in our pages, not in fragments but in perfect poems, accompanied with our comments, who had no means in those distant regions of possessing his volumes, whereas Maga flies on wings to the uttermost parts of the earth.

As for our own dear Scotland—for whose sake, with all her faults, the light of day is sweet to our eyes—twenty years ago there were not twenty copies—we question if there were ten—of the Lyrical Ballads in all the land of the mountain and the flood. Now Wordsworth is studied all Scotland over—and Scotland is proud and happy to know, from his Memorials of the Tours he has made through her brown heaths and shaggy woods, that the Bard's heart overflows with kindness towards her children—that his songs have celebrated the simple and heroic character of her olden times, nor left unhonoured the virtues that yet survive in her national character. All her generous youth regard him now as a great Poet; and we have been more affected than we should choose to confess, by the grateful acknowledgment of many a gifted spirit, that to us it was owing that they had opened their eyes and their hearts to the ineffable beauty of that poetry in which they had, under our instructions, found not a vain visionary delight, but a strength and succour and consolation, breathed as from a shrine in the silence and solitude of nature, in which stood their father's hut, sanctifying their humble birthplace with pious thoughts that made the very weekdays to them like Sabbaths—nor on the evening of the Sabbath might they not blamelessly be blended with those breathed from the Bible, enlarging their souls to religion by those meditative moods which such pure poetry inspires, and

by those habits of reflection which its study forms, when pursued under the influence of thoughtful peace.

Why, if it were not for that everlasting—we beg pardon—immortal Wordsworth—the LAKES, and all that belong to them, would be our own—*jure divino*—for we are the heir-apparent to the

"Sole King of rocky Cumberland."

But Wordsworth never will—never can die; and so we are in danger of being cheated out of our due dominion. We cannot think this fatherly treatment of such a son—and yet in our loftiest moods of filial reverence we have heard ourselves exclaiming, while

"The Cataract of Lodore
Real'd to our orisons,"

O King! live for ever!

Therefore, with the fear of the Excursion before our eyes, we took to prose—to numerous prose—ay, though we say it that should not say it, to prose as numerous as any verse—and showed such scenes

"As savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew."

Here an English lake—there a Scottish loch—till Turner grew jealous, and Thomson flung his brush at one of his own unfinished mountains—when lo! a miracle! Creative of grandeur in his very despair, he stood astonished at the cliff that came prerupt from his canvas, and christened itself "the Eagle's Eyrie," as it *frowned serenely* upon the sea, maddening in a foamy circle at its inaccessible feet.

Only in such prose as ours can the heart pour forth its effusions like a strong spring, discharging ever so many gallons in a minute, either into pipes that conduct it through some great Metropolitan city, or into a water-course that soon becomes a rivulet, then a stream, then a river, then a lake, and then a sea. Would Fancy luxuriate? Then let her expand wings of prose. In verse, however irregular, her flight is lime-twigg'd, and she soon takes to hopping on the ground. Would Imagination dive? Let the bell in which she sinks be constructed on the prose principle, and deeper than ever plummet sunk, it will startle monsters at the roots of the coral caves, yet be impervious to the strokes of the most tremendous of tails. Would she soar? In a prose balloon she seeks the stars. There is room and power of ascension for any quantity of ballast—fling it out and up she goes! Let some gas escape, and she descends far more gingerly than Mrs. Graham and his Serene Highness; the grapnel catches a stile, and she steps "like a dreadless angel unpursued" once more upon *terra firma*, and may then celebrate her aerial voyage, if she choose, in an Ode which will be sure near the end to rise—into prose.

Prose, we believe, is destined to drive what is called Poetry out of the world. Here is a fair challenge. Let any Poet send us a poem of five hundred lines—blanks or not—on any subject; and we shall write on that subject a passage of the same number of words in prose; and the Editors of the Quarterly, Edinburgh, and Westminster, shall decide which deserves the prize. Milton was woefully wrong in speaking of "prose or numerous verse."

Prose is a million times more numerous than verse. Then prose improves the more poetical it becomes; but verse, the moment it becomes prosaic, goes to the dogs. Then, the connecting links between two fine passages in verse, it is enjoined, shall be as little like verse as possible; nay, whole passages, critics say, should be of that sort; and why, pray, not prose at once? Why clip the King's English, or the Emperor's German, or the Sublime Porte's Turkish, into bits of dull jingle—pretending to be verses merely because of the proper number of syllables—some of them imprisoned perhaps in parentheses, where they sit helplessly protruding the bare soles of their feet, like folks that have got muzzy, in the stocks?

Wordsworth says well, that the language of common people, when giving utterance to passionate emotions, is highly figurative; and hence he concludes not so well fit for a lyrical ballad. Their volubility is great, nor few their flowers of speech. But who ever heard them, but by the merest accident, spout verses? Rhyme do they never—the utmost they reach is occasional blanks. But their prose! Ye gods! how they do talk! The washerwoman absolutely froths like her own tub; and you never dream of asking her "how she is off for soap?" Paradise Lost! The Excursion! The Task indeed! No man of woman born, no woman by man begotten, ever yet in his or her senses spoke like the authors of those poems. Hamlet, in his sublimest moods, speaks in prose—Lady Macbeth talks prose in her sleep—and so it should be printed. "Out, damned spot!" are three words of prose; and who that beheld Siddons wringing her hands to wash them of murder, did not feel that they were the most dreadful ever extorted by remorse from guilt!

A green old age is the most loving season of life, for almost all the other passions are then dead or dying—or the mind, no more at the mercy of a troubled heart, compares the little pleasure their gratification can ever yield now with what it could at any time long ago, and lets them rest. Envy is the worst disturber or embitterer of man's declining years; but it does not deserve the name of a passion—and is a disease, not of the poor in spirit—for they are blessed—but of the mean, and then they indeed are cursed. For our own parts we know Envy but as we have studied it in others—and never felt it except towards the wise and good; and then 'twas a longing desire to be like them—painful only when we thought that might never be, and that all our loftiest aspirations might be in vain. Our envy of Genius is of a nature so noble, that it knows no happiness like that of guarding from mildew the laurels on the brows of the Muses' Sons. What a dear kind soul of a critic is old Christopher North! Watering the flowers of poetry, and removing the weeds that might choke them—letting in the sunshine upon them, and fencing them from the blast—proclaiming where the gardens grow, and leading boys and virgins into the pleasant alleys—teaching hearts to love and eyes to see their beauty, and classifying, by the attributes it has pleased nature to bestow on the various orders, the

plants of Paradise—This is our occupation—and the happiness of witnessing them all growing in the light of admiration is our reward.

Finding our way back as we choose to Ivy-cottage, we cross the wooden bridge, and away along the western shore of Rydal-mere. Hence you see the mountains in magnificent composition, and craggy coppices with intervening green fields shelving down to the lake margin. It is a small lake, not much more than a mile round, and of a very peculiar character. One memorable cottage only, as far as we remember, peeps on its shore from a grove of sycamores, a statesman's pleasant dwelling; and there are the ruins of another on a slope near the upper end, the circle of the garden still visible. Every thing has a quiet but wildish pastoral and silvan look, and the bleating of sheep fills the hollow of the hills. The lake has a reedy inlet and outlet, and the angler thinks of pike when he looks upon such harbours. There is a single boat-house, where the Lady of the Hall has a padlocked and painted barge for pleasure parties; and the heronry on the high pine-trees of the only island connects the scene with the ancient park of Rydal, whose oak woods, though thinned and decayed, still preserve the majestic and venerable character of antiquity and baronial state.

Having taken a lingering farewell of Rydal-mere, and of the new Chapel-tower, that seems among the groves already to be an antique, we may either sink down to the stream that flows out of Grassmere and connects the two lakes, crossing a wooden bridge, and then joining the new road that sweeps along to the Village, or we may keep up on the face of the hill, and by a terrace-path reach the Loughrigg-road, a few hundred yards above Tail-end, a pretty cottage-ornée which you will observe crowning a wooded eminence, and looking cheerfully abroad over all the vale. There is one Mount in particular, whence we see to advantage the delightful panorama—encircling mountains—Grassmere Lake far down below your feet, with its one green pastoral isle, silvan shores, and emerald meadows—huts and homes sprinkled up and down in all directions—the village partly embowered in groves, and partly open below the shadow of large single trees—and the Churchtower, almost always a fine feature in the scenery of the north of England, standing in stately simplicity among the clustering tenements, nor dwindled even by the great height of the hills.

It is pleasant to lose sight entirely of a beautiful scene, and to plod along for a few hundred yards in almost objectless shadow. Our conceptions and feelings are bright and strong from the nearness of their objects, yet the dream is somewhat different from the reality. All at once, at a turning of the road, the splendour reappears like an unfurled banner, and the heart leaps in the joy of the senses. This sort of enjoyment comes upon you before you reach the Village of Grassmere from the point of vision above described, and a stranger sometimes is apt to doubt if it be really the same Lake—that one island, and those few promontories, shifting into such varied combi-

nations with the varying mountain-ridges and ranges, that show top over top in bewildering succession, and give hints of other valleys beyond, and of Tarns rarely visited, among the moorland wastes. A single long dim shadow, falling across the water, alters the whole physiognomy of the scene—nor less a single bright streak of sunshine, brightening up some feature formerly hidden, and giving animation and expression to the whole face of the Lake.

About a short mile from the Village Inn, you will pass by, without seeing it—unless warned not to do so—one of the most singularly beautiful habitations in the world. It belongs to a gentleman of the name of Barber, and, we believe, has been almost entirely built by him—the original hut on which his taste has worked having been a mere shell. The spirit of the place seems to us to be that of Shadowy Silence. Its bounds are small; but it is an indivisible part of a hillside so secret and silvan, that it might be the haunt of the roe. You hear the tinkle of a rill, invisible among the hazels—a bird sings or flutters—a bee hums his way through the bewildering woods—but no louder sound. Some fine old forest-trees extend widely their cool and glimmering shade; and a few stumps or armless trunks, whose bulk is increased by a load of ivy that hides the hollow wherein the owls have their domicile, give an air of antiquity to the spot, that, but for other accompaniments, would almost be melancholy. As it is, the scene has a pensive character. As yet you have seen no house, and wonder whither the gravel-walks are to conduct you, winding fancifully and fantastically through the smooth-shaven lawn, bestrewn by a few large leaves of the horse-chestnut or sycamore. But there are clustered verandas where the nightingale might woo the rose, and lattice-windows reaching from eaves to ground-sill, so sheltered that they might stand open in storm and rain, and tall circular chimneys, shaped almost like the stems of the trees that overshadow the roof irregular, and over all a gleam of blue sky and a few motionless clouds. The noisy world ceases to be, and the tranquil heart, delighted with the sweet seclusion, breathes, "Oh! that this were my cell, and that I were a hermit!"

But you soon see that the proprietor is not a hermit; for everywhere you discern unostentatious traces of that elegance and refinement that belong to social and cultivated life; nothing rude and rough-hewn, yet nothing prim and precise. Snails and spiders are taught to keep their own places; and among the flowers of that hanging garden on a sunny slope, not a weed is to be seen, for weeds are beautiful only by the wayside, in the matting of hedge-roots, by the mossy stone, and the brink of the well in the brae—and are offensive only when they intrude into society above their own rank, and where they have the air and accent of aliens. By pretty pebbled steps of stairs you mount up from platform to platform of the sloping woodland banks—the prospect widening as you ascend, till from a bridge that spans a leaping rivulet, you behold in full blow all Grassmere Vale, Village, Church-tower, and Lake, the whole of the mountains, and a noble

arch of sky, the circumference of that little world of peace.

Circumscribed as are the boundaries of this place, yet the grounds are so artfully, while one thinks so artlessly, laid out, that, wandering through their labyrinthine recesses, you might believe yourself in an extensive wilderness. Here you come out upon a green open glade—(you see by the sundial it is past seven o'clock)—there the arms of an immense tree overshadow what is in itself a scene—yonder you have an alley that serpentine into gloom and obscurity—and from that cliff you doubtless would see over the tree-tops into the outer and airy world. With all its natural beauties is intermingled an agreeable quaintness, that shows the owner has occasionally been working in the spirit of fancy, almost caprice; the tool-house in the garden is not without its ornaments—the barn seems habitable, and the byre has somewhat the appearance of a chapel. You see at once that the man who lives here, instead of being sick of the world, is attached to all elegant socialities and amities; that he uses silver cups instead of maple bowls, shows his scallop-shell among other curiosities in his cabinet, and will treat the passing pilgrim with pure water from the spring, if he insists upon that beverage, but will first offer him a glass of the yellow cowslip-wine, the cooling claret, or the sparkling champagne.

Perhaps we are all beginning to get a little hungry, but it is too soon to breakfast; so, leaving the village of Grassmere on the right, keep your eye on Helm-crag, while we are finding, without seeking, our way up Easdale. Easdale is an arm of Grassmere, and in the words of Mr. Green the artist, "it is in places profusely wooded, and charmingly sequestered among the mountains." Here you may hunt the waterfalls, in rainy weather easily run down, but difficult of detection in a drought. Several pretty rustic bridges cross and recross the main stream and its tributaries; the cottages, in nook and on hillside, are among the most picturesque and engaging in the whole country; the vale widens into spacious and noble meadow-grounds, on which might suitably stand the mansion of any nobleman in England—as you near its head, every thing gets wild and broken, with a slight touch of dreariness, and by no very difficult ascent, we might reach Easdale-tarn in less than an hour's walking from Grassmere—a lonely and impressive scene, and the haunt of the angler almost as frequently as of the shepherd.

How far can we enjoy the beauty of external nature under a sharp appetite for breakfast or dinner? On our imagination the effect of hunger is somewhat singular. We no longer regard sheep, for instance, as the fleecy or the bleating flock. Their wool or their baaing is nothing to us—we think of necks, and gigots, and saddles of mutton; and even the lamb frisking on the sunny bank is eaten by us in the shape of steaks and fry. If it is in the morning, we see no part of the cow but her udder, distilling richest milkiness. Instead of ascending to heaven on the smoke of a cottage chimney, we put our arms round the column, and descend on the lid of the great pan pre-

paring the family breakfast. Every interesting object in the landscape seems edible—our mouth waters all over the vale—as the village clock tolls eight, we involuntarily say grace, and Price on the Picturesque gives way to Meg Dods's Cookery.

Mrs. Bell of the Red Lion Inn, Grassmere, can give a breakfast with any woman in England. She bakes incomparable bread—firm, close, compact, and white, thin-crust, and admirably raised. Her yeast always works well. What butter! Before it a primrose must hide its unyellowed head. Then jam of the finest quality, goose, rasp, and strawberry! and as the jam is, so are her jellies. Hens cackle that the eggs are fresh—and these shrimps were scraping the sand last night in the Whitehaven sea. What glorious bannocks of barley-meal! Crisp wheaten cakes, too, no thicker than a wafer. Do not, our good sir, appropriate that cut of pickled salmon; it is heavier than it looks, and will weigh about four pounds. One might live a thousand years, yet never weary of such mutton-ham. Virgin honey, indeed! Let us hope that the bees were not smothered, but by some gracious disciple of Bonar or Huber decoyed from a full hive into an empty one, with half the summer and all the autumn before them to build and saturate their new Comb-Palace. No bad thing is a cold pigeon pie, especially of cushats. To hear them cooing in the centre of a wood is one thing, and to see them lying at the bottom of a pie is another—which is the better, depends entirely on time, place, and circumstance. Well, a beef-steak at breakfast is rather startling—but let us try a bit with these fine ingenious youthful potatoes, from a light sandy soil on a warm slope. Next to the country clergy, smugglers are the most spiritual of characters; and we verily believe that to be "sma' still." Our dear sir—you are in orders, we believe—will you have the goodness to return thanks? Yes, now you may ring the bell for the bill. Moderate indeed! With a day's work before one, there is nothing like the deep broad basis of breakfast.

SECOND SAUNTER.

It is yet only ten o'clock—and what a multitude of thoughts and feelings, sights and sounds, lights and shadows have been ours since sunrise! Had we been in bed, all would have remained unfelt and unknown. But, to be sure, one dream might have been worth them all. Dreams, however, when they are over, are gone, be they of bliss or bale, heaven or the shades. No one weeps over a dream. With such tears no one would sympathize. Give us reality, "the sober certainty of waking bliss," and to it memory shall cling. Let the object of our sorrow belong to the living world, and, transient though it be, its power may be immortal. Away then, as of little worth, all the unsubstantial and wavering world of dreams, and in their place give us the very humblest humanities, so much the better if enjoyed in some beautiful scene of nature like

this, where all is steadfast but the clouds whose very being is change, and the flow of waters that have been in motion since the Flood.

Ha! a splendid equipage with a coronet. And out steps, handed by her elated husband, a high-born, beautiful and graceful bride. They are making a tour of the Lakes, and the honeymoon hath not yet filled her horns. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness on this earth, here it is—youth, elegance, health, rank, riches, and love—all united in ties that death alone can sunder. How they hang towards each other—the blissful pair! Blind in their passion to all the scenery they came to admire, or beholding it but by fits and snatches, with eyes that can see only one object. She hath already learnt to forget father and mother, and sister and brother, and all the young creatures like herself—every one—that shared the pastimes and the confidence of her virgin youthhood. With her, as with Genevieve—

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame!"

And will this holy state of the spirit endure? No—it will fade, and fade, and fade away, so imperceptibly, so unconsciously, (so like the shortening of the long summer days, that lose minute after minute of the light, till again we hear the yellow leaves rustling in autumnal twilight,) that the heart within that snow-drifted bosom will know not how great has been the change, till at last it shall be told the truth, and know that all mortal emotion, however paradisiacal, is born to die.

Fain would we believe that forebodings like these are, on all such occasions, whispered by a blind and ignorant misanthropy, and that of wedded life it may generally be said,

"O, happy state, where souls together draw,
Where love is liberty, and nature law!"

What profound powers of affection, grief, pity, sympathy, delight, and religion belong, by its constitution, to the frame of every human soul! And if the courses of life have not greatly thwarted the divine dispensations of nature, will they not all rise into genial play within bosoms consecrated to each other's happiness, till comes between them the cold hand of death? It would seem that every thing fair and good must flourish under that holy necessity—every thing foul and bad fade away; and that no quarrel or unkindness could ever be between pilgrims travelling together through time to eternity, whether their path lead through an Eden or a waste. Habit itself comes with humble hearts to be gracious and benign; they who have once loved, will not, for that very reason, cease to love; memory shall brighten when hope decays; and if the present be not now so blissful, so thrilling, so steeped in rapture as it was in the golden prime, yet shall it without repining suffice to them whose thoughts borrow unconsciously sweet comforts from the past and future, and have been taught by mutual cares and sorrows to indulge tempered expectations of the best earthly felicity. And is it not so? How much tranquillity and contentment in human homes! Calm onflowings

of life shaded in domestic privacy, and seen but at times coming out into the open light! What brave patience under poverty! What beautiful resignation in grief! Riches take wings to themselves and flee away—yet without and within the door there is the decency of a changed, not an unhappy lot—The clouds of adversity darken men's characters even as if they were the shadows of dishonour, but conscience quails not in the gloom—The well out of which humility hath her daily drink, is nearly dried up to the very spring, but she upbraideth not Heaven—Children, those flowers that make the hovel's earthen floor delightful as the glades of Paradise, wither in a day, but there is holy comfort in the mother's tears; nor are the groans of the father altogether without relief—for they have gone whither they came, and are blooming now in the bowers of Heaven.

Reverse the picture—and tremble for the fate of those whom God hath made one, and whom no man must put asunder. In common natures, what hot and sensual passions, whose gratification ends in indifference, disgust, loathing, or hatred! What a power of misery, from fretting to madness, lies in that mean but mighty word—Temper! The face, to whose meek beauty smiles seemed native during the days of virgin love, shows now but a sneer, a scowl, a frown, or a glare of scorn. The shape of those features is still fine—the eye of the gazelle—the Grecian nose and forehead—the ivory teeth, so small and regular—and thin line of ruby lips breathing Circassian luxury—the snow-drifts of the bosom still heave there—a lovelier waist Apollo never encircled stepping from the chariot of the sun—nor limbs more graceful did ever Diana veil beneath the shadows of Mount Latmos. But she is a fiend—a devil incarnate, and the sovereign beauty of three counties has made your house a hell.

But suppose that you have had the sense and sagacity to marry a homely wife—or one comely at the best—nay, even that you have sought to secure your peace by admitted ugliness—or wedded a woman whom all tongues call plain; then may an insurance-ticket, indeed, flame like the sun in miniature on the front of your house—but what Joint-Stock Company can undertake to repay the loss incurred by the perpetual singeing of the smouldering flames of strife, that blaze up without warning at bed and board, and keep you in an everlasting alarm of fire? We defy you to utter the most glaring truth that shall not be instantly contradicted. The most rational proposals for a day or hour of pleasure, at home or abroad, are on the nail negated as absurd. If you dine at home every day for a month, she wonder; why nobody asks you out, and fears you take no trouble to make yourself agreeable. If you dine from home one day in a month, then are you charged with being addicted to tavern-clubs. Children are perpetual bones of contention—there is hatred and sorrow in house-bills—rent and taxes are productive of endless grievances; and although education be an excellent thing—indeed quite a fortune in itself—especially to a poor Scotsman going to England, where all the people are barbarous—

yet is it irritatingly expensive when a great Northern Nursery sends out its hordes, and gawky hoydens and hobble-te-hoys are getting themselves accomplished in the foreign languages, music, drawing, geography, the use of the globes, and the dumb-bells.

“Let observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru.”

(Two bad lines by the way, though written by Dr. Johnson)—and observation will find the literature of all countries filled with sarcasms against the marriage-life. Our old Scottish songs and ballads, especially, delight in representing it as a state of ludicrous misery and discomfort. There is little or no talk of horns—the dilemma of English wit; but every individual moment of every individual minute, of every individual hour, of every individual day, and so on, has its peculiar, appropriate, characteristic, and incurable wretchedness. Yet the delightful thing is, that in spite of all this jeering and gibing, and grinning and hissing, and pointing with the finger—marrying and giving in marriage, births and christenings, continue their career of prosperity; and the legitimate population doubles itself somewhere about every thirty-five years. Single houses rise out of the earth—double houses become villages—villages towns—towns cities. and our Metropolis is itself a world!

While the lyrical poetry of Scotland is thus rife with reproach against wedlock, it is equally rife with panegyric on the tender passion that leads into its toils. In one page you shudder in a cold sweat over the mean miseries of the poor “gudeman;” in the next you see, unconscious of the same approaching destiny, the enamoured youth lying on his Mary's bosom beneath the milkwhite thorn. The pastoral pipe is tuned under a fate that hurries on all living creatures to love; and not one lawful embrace is shunned from any other fears than those which themselves spring up in the poor man's thoughtful heart. The wicked betray, and the weak fall—bitter tears are shed at midnight from eyes once bright as the day—fair faces never smile again, and many a hut has its broken heart—hope comes and goes, finally vanquishing, or yielding to despair—crowned passion dies the sated death, or, with increase of appetite, grows by what it feeds on—wide, but unseen, over all the regions of the land, are cheated hopes, vain desires, gnawing jealousy, dispirited fear, and swarthy-souled revenge—beseechings, seductions, suicides, and insanities—and all, all spring from the root of Love; yet all the nations of the earth call the Tree blest, and long as time endures, will continue to flock thither panting to devour the fruitage, of which every other golden globe is poison and death.

Smile away then, with all thy most irresistible blandishments, thou young and happy Bride! What business have we to prophesy bedimmed tears to those resplendent eyes? or that the talisman of that witching smile can ever lose its magic? Are not the high-born daughters of England also the high-souled? And hath not honour and virtue, and charity and religion, guarded for centuries the lofty line of thy pure and unpolluted blood? Joy.

ful, therefore, mayst thou be, as the dove in the sunshine on the Tower-top—and as the dove serene, when she sitteth on her nest within the yew-tree's gloom, far within the wood!

Passing from our episode, let us say that we are too well acquainted with your taste, feeling, and judgment, to tell you on what objects to gaze or glance, in such a scene as the vale and village of Grassmere. Of yourselves you will find out the nooks and corners from which the pretty whitewashed and flowering cottages do most picturesquely combine with each other, and with the hills, and groves, and old church-tower. Without our guiding hand will you ascend knoll and eminence, be there pathway or no pathway, and discover for yourselves new Lake-Landscapes. Led by your own sweet and idle, chaste and noble fancies, you will disappear, single, or in pairs and parties, into little woody wildernesses, where you will see nothing but ground-flowers and a glimmering contiguity of shade. Solitude sometimes, you know, is best society, and short retirement urges sweet return. Various travels or voyages of discovery may be undertaken, and their grand object attained in little more than an hour. The sudden whirr of a cushat is an incident, or the leaping of a lamb among the broom. In the quiet of nature, matchless seems the music of the milkmaid's song—and of the hearty laugh of the haymakers, crossing the meadow in rows, how sweet the cheerful echo from Helm-crag! Grassmere appears by far the most beautiful place in all the Lake-country. You buy a field—build a cottage—and in imagination lie (for they are too short to enable you to sit) beneath the shadow of your own trees!

In an English village—highland or lowland—seldom is there any spot so beautiful as the churchyard. That of Grassmere is especially so, with the pensive shadows of the old church-tower settling over its cheerful graves. Ay, its cheerful graves! Startle not at the word as too strong—for the pigeons are cooing in belfry, the stream is murmuring round the mossy churchyard wall, a few lambs are lying on the mounds, and flowers laughing in the sunshine over the cells of the dead. But hark! the bell tolls—one—one—one—a funeral knell, speaking not of time, but of eternity! To-day there is to be a burial—and close to the wall of the Tower you see the new-dug grave.

Hush! The sound of singing voices in yonder wood, deadened by the weight of umbrage! Now it issues forth into the clear air, and now all is silence—but the pause speaks of death. Again the melancholy swell ascends the sky—and then comes slowly along the funeral procession, the coffin borne aloft, and the mourners all in white; for it is a virgin who is carried to her last home. Let every head be reverently uncovered while the psalm enters the gate, and the bier is borne for holy rites along the chancel of the church, and laid down close to the altar. A smothered sobbing disturbeth not the service—'tis a human spirit breathing in accordance with the divine. Mortals weeping for the immortal—Earth's passions cleaving to one who is now in heaven.

Was she one flower of many, and singled out by death's unsparing finger from a wreath of beauty, whose remaining blossoms seem now to have lost all their fragrance and all their brightness? Or was she the sole delight of her gray-haired parents' eyes, and is the voice of joy extinguished in their low-roofed home for ever! Had her loveliness been beloved, and had her innocent hopes anticipated the bridal-day, nor her heart, whose beatings were numbered, ever feared that narrow bed? All that we know is her name and age—you see them glittering on her coffin—"Anabella Irvine, aged six years!"

The day seems something dim, now that we are all on our way back to Ambleside; and, although the clouds are neither heavier nor more numerous than before, somehow or other the sun is a little obscured. We must not indulge too long in a mournful mood—yet let us all sit down under the shadow of this grove of sycamores, overshadowing this reedy bay of Rydal-mere, and listen to a Tale of Tears.

Many a tame tradition, embalmed in a few pathetic verses, lives for ages, while the memory of the most affecting incidents, to which genius has allied no general emotion, fades like the mist, and leaves heart-rending griefs undeplorable. Elegies and dirges might indeed have well been sung amidst the green ruins of yonder Cottage, that looks now almost like a fallen wall—at best, the remnants of a cattle-shed shaken down by the storm.

Thirty years ago—how short a time in national history—how long in that of private sorrows!—all tongues were speaking of the death that there befell, and to have seen the weeping, you would have thought that the funeral could never have been forgotten. But stop now the shepherd on the hill, and ask him who lived in that nook, and chance is he knows not even their name, much less the story of their afflictions. It was inhabited by Allan Fleming, his wife, and an only child, known familiarly in her own small world by the name of LUCY OF THE FOLD. In almost every district among the mountains, there is its peculiar pride—some one creature to whom nature has been especially kind, and whose personal beauty, sweetness of disposition, and felt superiority of mind and manner, single her out, unconsciously, as an object of attraction and praise, making her the May-day Queen of the unending year. Such a darling was Lucy Fleming ere she had finished her thirteenth year; and strangers, who had heard tell of her loveliness, often dropt in, as if by accident, to see the Beauty of Rydal-mere. Her parents rejoiced in their child; nor was there any reason why they should dislike the expression of delight and wonder with which so many regarded her. Shy was she as a woodland bird, but as fond too of her nest; and, when there was nothing near to disturb her, her life was almost a perpetual hymn. From joy to sadness, and from sadness to joy; from silence to song, and from song to silence; from stillness like that of the butterfly on the flower, to motion like that of the same creature wavering in the sunshine over the wood-top—was to Lucy as welcome a change as the change of

lights and shadows, breezes and calms, in the mountain-country of her birth.

One summer day, a youthful stranger appeared at the door of the house, and after an hour's stay, during which Lucy was from home, asked if they would let him have lodging with them for a few months—a single room for bed and books, and that he would take his meals with the family. Enthusiastic boy! to him poetry had been the light of life, nor did ever creature of poetry belong more entirely than he to the world of imagination. He had come into the free mountain region from the confinement of college-walls, and his spirit expanded within him like a rainbow. No eyes had he for realities—all nature was seen in the light of genius—not a single object at sunrise and sunset the same. All was beautiful within the circle of the green hill-tops, whether shrouded in the soft mists or clearly outlined in a cloudless sky. Home, friends, colleges, cities—all sunk away into oblivion, and HARRY HOWARD felt as if wafted off on the wings of a spirit, and set down in a land beyond the sea, foreign to all he had before experienced, yet in its perfect and endless beauty appealing every hour more tenderly and strongly to a spirit awakened to new power, and revelling in new emotion. In that cottage he took up his abode. In a few weeks came a library of books in all languages; and there was much wondering talk over all the countryside about the mysterious young stranger who now lived at the Fold.

Every day—and, when he chose to absent himself from his haunts among the hills, every hour was Lucy before the young poet's eyes—and every hour did her beauty wax more beautiful in his imagination. Who Mr. Howard was, or even if that were indeed his real name, no one knew; but none doubted that he was of gentle birth, and all with whom he had ever conversed in his elegant amenity, could have sworn that a youth so bland and free, and with such a voice, and such eyes, would not have injured the humblest of God's creatures, much less such a creature as Lucy of the Fold. It was indeed even so—for, before the long summer days were gone, he who had never had a sister, loved her even as if she had slept on the same maternal bosom. Father or mother he now had none—indeed, scarcely one near relation—although he was rich in this world's riches, but in them poor in comparison with the noble endowments that nature had lavished upon his mind. His guardians took little heed of the splendid but wayward youth—and knew not now whither his fancies had carried him, were it even to some savage land. Thus, the Fold became to him the one dearest roof under the roof of heaven. All the simple on-goings of that humble home, love and imagination beautified into poetry; and all the rough or coarser edges of lowly life, were softened away in the light of genius that transmuted every thing on which it fell; while all the silent intimations which nature gave there of her primal sympathies, in the hut as fine and forceful as in the hall, showed to his excited spirit pre-eminently lovely, and chained it to

the hearth around which was read the morning and the evening prayer.

What wild schemes does not love imagine, and in the face of very impossibility achieve! "I will take Lucy to myself, if it should be in place of all the world. I will myself shed light over her being, till in a new spring it shall be adorned with living flowers that fade not away, perennial and self-renewed. In a few years the bright docile creature will have the soul of a very angel—and then, before God and at his holy altar, mine shall she become for ever—here and hereafter—in this paradise of earth, and, if more celestial be, in the paradise of heaven."

Thus two summers and two winters wheeled away into the past; and in the change, imperceptible from day to day, but glorious at last, wrought on Lucy's nature by communication with one so prodigally endowed, scarcely could her parents believe it was their same child, except that she was dutiful as before, as affectionate, and as fond of all the familiar objects, dead or living, round and about her birth-place. She had now grown to woman's stature—tall, though she scarcely seemed so except when among her playmates; and in her maturing loveliness, fulfilling, and far more than fulfilling the fair promise of her childhood. Never once had the young stranger—stranger no more—spoken to daughter, father, or mother, of his love. Indeed, for all that he felt towards Lucy there must have been some other word than love. Tenderness, which was almost pity—an affection that was often sad—wonder at her surpassing beauty, nor less at her unconsciousness of its power—admiration of her spiritual qualities, that ever rose up to meet instruction as if already formed—and that heart-throbbing that stirs the blood of youth when the innocent eyes it loves are beaming in the twilight through smiles or through tears,—these, and a thousand other feelings, and above all, the creative faculty of a poet's soul, now constituted his very being when Lucy was in presence, nor forsook him when he was alone among the mountains.

At last it was known through the country that Mr. Howard—the stranger, the scholar, the poet, the elegant gentleman, of whom nobody knew much, but whom every body loved, and whose father must at the least have been a lord, was going—in a year or less—to marry the daughter of Allan Fleming—Lucy of the Fold. Oh, grief and shame to the parents—if still living—of the noble Boy! Oh, sorrow for himself when his passion dies—when the dream is dissolved—and when, in place of the angel of light who now moves before him, he sees only a child of earth, lowly-born, and long rudely bred—a being only fair as many others are fair, sister in her simplicity to maidens no less pleasing than she, and partaking of many weaknesses, frailties, and faults now unknown to herself in her happiness, and to him in his love! Was there no one to rescue them from such a fate—from a few months of imaginary bliss, and from many years of real bale? How could such a man as Allan Fleming be so infatuated as sell his child to fickle youth, who

would soon desert her broken-hearted? Yet kind thoughts, wishes, hopes, and beliefs prevailed; nor were there wanting stories of the olden time, of low-born maidens married to youths of high estate, and raised from hut to hall, becoming mothers of a lordly line of sons, that were counsellors to Kings and Princes.

In Spring, Mr. Howard went away for a few months—it was said to the great city—and on his return at midsummer, Lucy was to be his bride. They parted with a few peaceful tears, and though absent were still together. And now a letter came, saying that before another Sabbath he would be at the Fold. A few fields in Easedale, long mortgaged beyond their fee-simple by the hard-working statesman from whom they reluctantly were passing away, had meanwhile been purchased by Mr. Howard, and in that cottage they were to abide, till they had built for themselves a house a little further up the side of the silvan hill, below the shadow of Helm-crag. Lucy saw the Sabbath of his return and its golden sun, but it was in her mind's eye only; for ere it was to descend behind the hills, she was not to be among the number of living things.

Up Forest-Ullswater the youth had come by the light of the setting sun; and as he crossed the mountains to Grassmere by the majestic pass of the Hawse, still as every new star arose in heaven, with it arose as lustrous a new emotion from the bosom of his betrothed. The midnight hour had been fixed for his return to the Fold; and as he reached the cliffs above White-moss, according to agreement a light was burning in the low window, the very planet of love. It seemed to shed a bright serenity over all the vale, and the moon-glittering waters of Rydal-mere were as an image of life, pure, lonely, undisturbed, and at the pensive hour how profound! "Blessing and praise be to the gracious God! who framed my spirit so to delight in his beautiful and glorious creation—blessing and praise to the Holy One, for the boon of my Lucy's innocent and religious love!" Prayers crowded fast into his soul, and tears of joy fell from his eyes, as he stood at the threshold, almost afraid in the trembling of life-deep affection to meet her first embrace.

In the silence, sobs and sighs, and one or two long deep groans! Then in another moment, he saw, through the open door of the room where Lucy used to sleep, several figures moving to and fro in the light, and one figure upon its knees, who else could it be but her father! Unnoticed he became one of the pale-faced company—and there he beheld her on her bed, mute and motionless, her face covered with a deplorable beauty—eyes closed, and her hands clasped upon her breast! "Dead, dead, dead!" muttered in his ringing ears a voice from the tombs, and he fell down in the midst of them with great violence upon the floor.

Encircled with arms that lay round him softer and silkier far than flower-wreaths on the neck of a child who has laid him down from play, was he when he awoke from that fit—lying even on his own maiden's bed, and within her very bosom, that beat yet, although soon about to beat no more. At that blest

awakening moment, he might have thought he saw the first glimpse of light of the morning after his marriage-day; for her face was turned towards his breast, and with her faint breathings he felt the touch of tears. Not tears alone now bedimmed those eyes, for tears he could have kissed away; but the blue lids were heavy with something that was not slumber—the orbs themselves were scarcely visible—and her voice—it was gone, to be heard never again, till in the choir of white-robed spirits that sing at the right hand of God.

Yet, no one doubted that she knew him—him who had dropt down, like a superior being, from another sphere, on the innocence of her simple childhood—had taught her to know so much of her own soul—to love her parents with a profounder and more holy love—to see, in characters more divine, Heaven's promises of forgiveness to every contrite heart—and a life of perfect blessedness beyond death and the grave. A smile that shone over her face the moment that she had been brought to know that he had come at last, and was nigh at hand—and that never left it while her bosom moved—no—not for all the three days and nights that he continued to sit beside the corpse, when father and mother were forgetting their cares in sleep—that smile told all who stood around, watching her departure, neighbour, friend, priest, parent, and him the suddenly distracted and desolate, that in the very moment of expiration, she knew him well, and was recommending him and his afflictions to the pity of One who died to save sinners.

Three days and three nights, we have said, did he sit beside her, who so soon was to have been his bride—and come or go who would into the room, he saw them not—his sight was fixed on the winding-sheet, eyeing it without a single tear from feet to forehead, and sometimes looking up to heaven. As men forgotten in dungeons have lived miserably long without food, so did he—and so he would have done, on and on to the most far-off funeral day. From that one chair, close to the bedside, he never rose. Night after night, when all the vale was hushed, he never slept. Through one of the midnights there had been a great thunder-storm, the lightning smiting a cliff close to the cottage; but it seemed that he heard it not—and during the floods of next day, to him the roaring vale was silent. On the morning of the funeral, the old people—for now they seemed to be old—wept to see him sitting still beside their dead child; for each of the few remaining hours had now its own sad office, and a man had come to nail down the coffin. Three black specks suddenly alighted on the face of the corpse—and then off—and on—and away—and returning—was heard the buzzing of large flies, attracted by beauty in its corruption. "Ha—ha!" starting up, he cried in horror—"What birds of prey are these, whom Satan hath sent to devour the corpse?" He became stricken with a sort of palsy—and, being led out to the open air, was laid down, seemingly as dead as her within, on the green daisied turf, where, beneath the shadow of the sycamore, they had so often sat, building up beautiful visions of a long blissful life.

The company assembled, but not before his eyes—the bier was lifted up and moved away down the silvan slope, and away round the head of the Lake, and over the wooden bridge, accompanied, here and there, as it passed the wayside houses on the road to Grassmere, by the sound of psalms—but he saw—he heard not; when the last sound of the spade rebounded from the smooth arch of the grave, he was not by—but all the while he was lying where they left him, with one or two pitying dalesmen at his head and feet. When he awoke again and rose up, the cottage of the Fold was as if she had never been born—for she had vanished for ever and aye, and her sixteen years' smiling life was all extinguished in the dust.

Weeks and months passed on, and still there was a vacant wildness in his eyes, and a mortal ghastliness all over his face, inexpressive of a reasonable soul. It scarcely seemed that he knew where he was, or in what part of the earth, yet, when left by himself, he never sought to move beyond the boundaries of the Fold. During the first faint glimmerings of returning reason, he would utter her name, over and over many times, with a mournful voice, but still he knew not that she was dead—then he began to caution them all to tread softly, for that sleep had fallen upon her, and her fever in its blessed balm might abate—

then with groans, too affecting to be borne by those who heard them, he would ask why, since she was dead, God had the cruelty to keep him, her husband, in life; and finally and last of all, he imagined himself in Grassmere Churchyard, and clasping a little mound on the green, which it was evident he thought was her grave, he wept over it for hours and hours, and kissed it, and placed a stone at its head, and sometimes all at once broke out into fits of laughter, till the hideous fainting-fits returned, and after long convulsions left him lying as if stone-dead. As for his bodily frame, when Lucy's father lifted it up in his arms, little heavier was it than a bundle of withered fern. Nobody supposed that one so miserably attenuated and ghost-like could for many days be alive—yet not till the earth had thrice revolved round the sun, did that body die, and then it was buried far away from the Fold, the banks of Rydal-water, and the sweet mountains of Westmoreland; for after passing like a shadow through many foreign lands, he ceased his pilgrimage in Palestine, even beneath the shadow of Mount Sion, and was laid, with a lock of hair—which, from the place it held, strangers knew to have belonged to one dearly beloved—close to his heart, on which it had lain so long, and was to moulder away in darkness together, by Christian hands and in a Christian sepulchre.

L'ENVOY.

PERIODICAL literature is a type of many of the most beautiful things and interesting events in nature; or say, rather, that *they* are types of it—the Flowers and the Stars. As to Flowers, they are the prettiest periodicals ever published in folio—the leaves are wire-wove and hot-pressed by Nature's self; their circulation is wide over all the land; from castle to cottage they are regularly taken in; as old age bends over them, his youth is renewed; and you see childhood poring upon them pressed close to its very bosom. Some of them are ephemeral—their contents are exhaled between the rising and setting sun. Once a week others break through their green, pink, or crimson cover; and how delightful, on the seventh day, smiles in the sunshine the Sabbath Flower—a Sunday publication perused without blame by the most religious—even before morning prayer! Each month, indeed, throughout the whole year, has its own Flower periodical. Some are annual, some biennial, some triennial, and there are perennials that seem to live for ever—and yet are still periodical—though our love will not allow us to know when they die, and phoenix-like reappear from their own ashes. So much for Flowers—typifying or typified;—leaves emblematical of pages—buds of binding—dew-veils of covers—and the wafting away of bloom and fragrance like the dissemination of fine feelings, bright fancies, and winged thoughts.

The Flowers are the periodicals of the earth—the Stars are the periodicals of heaven. With what unfailing regularity do the numbers issue forth! Hesperus and Lucifer! ye are one concern. The Pole-star is studied by all nations. How popular the poetry of the Moon! On what subject does not the Sun throw light? No fear of hurting your eyes by reading that fine clear large type on that softened page. As you turn them over, one blue, another yellow, and another green, all are alike delightful to the pupil, dear as the very apple of his eye. Yes, the great Periodical Press of heaven is unceasingly at work—night and day; the only free power all over the world—'tis indeed like the air we breathe—if we have it not, we die.

Look, then, at all paper periodicals with pleasure, for sake of the Flowers and the Stars. Suppose them all extinct, and life would be like a flowerless earth, a starless heaven. We should soon forget the Seasons. The periodicals of the External would soon all lose their meaning, were there no longer any periodicals of the Internal. These are the lights and shadows of life, merrily dancing or gravely stealing over the dial; remembrancers of the past—teachers of the present—prophets of the future hours. Were they all dead, Spring would in vain renew her promise—wearisome would be the interminable summer days—the fruits of autumn tasteless—the winter ingle

blink mournfully round the hearth. What are the blessed Seasons themselves, in nature and in Thomson, but periodicals of a larger growth? We should doubt the goodness of that man's heart, who loved not the periodical literature of earth and sky—who would not weep to see one of its flowers wither—one of its stars fall—one beauty die on its humble bed—one glory drop from its lofty sphere. Let them bloom and burn on—flowers in which there is no poison, stars in which there is no disease—whose blossoms are all sweet, and whose rays are all sanative—both alike steeped in dew, and both, to the fine ear of nature's worshipper, bathed in music.

Pomposo never reads Magazine poetry—nor, we presume, ever looks at a field or wayside flower. He studies only the standard authors. He walks only in gardens with high brick walls—and then admires only at a hint from the head-gardener. Pomposo does not know that many of the finest poems of our day first appeared in magazines—or, worse still, in newspapers; and that in our periodicals, daily and weekly, equally with the monthlies and quarterlies, is to be found the best criticism of poetry any where extant, superior far, in that upretending form, to nine-tenths of the learned lucubrations of Germany—though some of it, too, is good—almost as one's heart could desire. What is the circulation even of a popular volume of verses—if any such there be—to that of a number of *Maga*? Hundreds of thousands at home peruse it before it is a week old—as many abroad ere the moon has thrice renewed her horns; and the *Series* ceases not—regular as the Seasons that make up the perfect year. Our periodical literature—say of it what you will—gives light to the heads and heat to the hearts of millions of our race. The greatest and best men of the age have not disdained to belong to the brotherhood;—and thus the hovel holds what must not be missing in the hall—the furniture of the cot is the same as that of the palace—and duke and ditcher read their lessons from the same page.

Good people have said, and it would be misanthropical to disbelieve or discredit their judgment, that our Prose is original—nay, has created a new era in the history of Periodical Literature. Only think of that, Christopher, and up with your Tail like a Peacock! Why, there is some comfort in that reflection, while we sit rubbing our withered hands up and down on these shrivelled shanks. Our feet are on the fender, and that fire is felt on our face; but we verily believe our ice-cold shanks would not shrink from the application of the redhot poker. Peter has a notion that but for that redhot poker the fire would go out; so to humour him we let it remain in the ribs, and occasionally brandish it round our head in

moments of enthusiasm when the Crutch looks tame, and the Knout a silken leash for Italian Greyhound.

Old Simonides—old Mimnermus—old Theognis—old Solon—old Anacreon—old Sophocles—old Pindar—old Hesiod—old Homer—and old Methuselah! What mean we by the word *old*? All these men are old in three lights—they lived to a raven age—long, long ago—and we heard tell of them in our youth. Their glory dawned on us in a dream of life's golden prime—and far away seems now that dawn, as if in another world beyond a million seas! In that use of the word "*old*," far from us is all thought of dotage or decay. Old are those great personages as the stars are old; a heaven there is in which are seen shining, for ever young, all the most ancient spiritual "orbs of Song."

In our delight, too, we love to speak of old Venus and of old Cupid—of old Eve and of old Cleopatra—of old Helen and of old Dalilah; yea, of old Psyche, though her aerial wings are as rainbow-bright as the first hour she waved them in the eye of the youthful Sun.

How full of endearment "old boy!"—"old girl!"—"Old Christopher North!"—"old Maga!" To our simplest sayings age seems to give a consecration which youth reverses. And why may not our hand, withered somewhat though it be, but yet unpalsied, point out aloft to heedless eyes single light or constellation, or lily by herself or in groups unsuspected along the waysides of our mortal pilgrimage!

Age like ours is even more loveable than venerable; and, thinking on ourselves, were we a young woman, we should assuredly marry an old man. Indeed, no man ought to marry before thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty; and, were it not that life is so short, soon enough at three-score and ten. At seventy you are sager than ever, though scarcely so strong. You and life love each other as well as ever; yet 'tis unpleasant, when sailing on *Wundermere* or *Lochlomond* with your bride, to observe the man in the Honeymoon looking at you with a congratulatory grin of condolence, to fear that the old villain will smile over your grave in the Season of Kirns and Harvest Homes, when the fiddle is heard in every farmhouse, and the bagpipes are lowing like cattle, on a thousand hills. Fain would he insure his life on the Tipperary Tables. But the enamoured annuitant is haunted with visions of his own Funeral deploying in a long line of chariots—one at the head of all armed with scythes—through the city, into the wide gates of the Greyfriars. Lovely is his bride in white, nor less so his widow in black—more so in gray, portentous of a great change. Sad, too, to the Sage the thought of leaving his first-born as yet unborn—or if born, haply an elfish creature with a precocious countenance, looking as if he had begun life with borrowing ten years at least from his own father—auld-far-fairt as a Fairy, and gash as the Last of the Lairds.

Dearly do we love the young—yea, the young of all animals—the young swallows twittering from their straw-built shed—the

young lambs bleating on the lea—the young bees, God bless them! on their first flight away off to the heather—the young butterflies, who, born in the morning, will die of old age ere night—the young salmon-fry glorying in the gravel at the first feeling of their fins—the young adders basking, ere they can bite, in the sun, as yet unconscious, like sucking satirists, of their stings—young pigs, pretty dears! all asqueak with their curled tails after prolific grumpy—young lions and tigers, charming cubs! like very Christian children nuzzling in their nurse's breast—young devils, ere Satan has sent them to Sin, who keeps a fashionable boarding-school in Hades, and sends up into the world above-ground only her finished scholars.

Oh! lad of the lightsome forehead! Thou art smiling at Us; and for the sake of our own Past we enjoy thy Present, and pardon the contumely with which thou silently insultest our thin gray hairs. Just such another "were we at Ravensburg?" "*Carpe Diem*" was then our motto, as now it is yours; "no fear that dinner cool," for we fed then, as you feed now, on flowers and fruits of Eden. We lived then under the reign of the Seven Senses; Imagination was Prime Minister, and Reason, as Lord Chancellor, had the keeping of the Royal Conscience; and they were kings, not tyrants—we subjects, not slaves. Supercilious as thou art, Puer, art thou as well read in Greek as we were at thy flowering age? Come close that we may whisper into thine ear—while we lean our left shoulder on thine—our right on the Crutch. The time will come when thou wilt be, O Son of the Morning! even like unto the shadow by thy side! Was he not once a mountaineer? If he be a vain-glorious boaster, give him the lie, Ben-y-glow and thy brotherhood—ye who so often heard our shouts mixed with the red-deer's belling—tossed back in exultation by Echo, Omnipresent Auditress on youth's golden hills.

Know, all ye Neophytes, that three lovely Sisters often visit the old man's solitude—Memory, Imagination, Hope. It would be hard to say which is the most beautiful. Memory has deep, dark, quiet eyes, and when she closes their light, the long eyelashes lie like shadows on her pensive cheeks, that smile faintly as if the dreamer were half asleep—a visionary slumber, which sometimes the dewdrop melting on the leaf will break, sometimes not the thunder-peal with all its echoes. Imagination is a brighter and bolder Beauty, with large lamping eyes of uncertain colour, as if fluctuating with rainbow light, and with features fine as those which Grecian genius gave to the Muses in the Parian Marble, yet in their daring delicacy defined like the face of Apollo. As for Hope—divinest of the divine—Collins, in one long line of light, has painted the picture of the angel,—

"And Hope, enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair."

All our great prose-writers owe the glory of their power to our great poets. Even Hobbes translated Homer as well—that is as ill—as Thucydides; the Epic in his prime after

eighty; the History in his youth at forty; and it is fearful to dream what the brainful and heartless metaphysician would have been, had he never heard of the Iliad and the Odyssey. What is the greatest of prose-writers in comparison with a great poet? Nay—we shall not be deterred by the fear of self-contradiction (see our “Stroll to Grassmere”) from asking who is a great prose-writer? We cannot name one; they all sink in Shakspeare. Campbell finely asks and answers—

“Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh! what were man? a world without a sun.”

Suppose the world without poetry—how absurd would seem the Sun! Strip the word “phenomena” of its poetical meaning, and forthwith the whole human race, “moving about in worlds *realized*,” would lose their powers of speech. But, thank Heaven! we are Makers all. Inhabiting, we verily believe, a real, and substantial, and palpable outer world, which nevertheless shall one day perish like a scroll, we build our bowers of joy in the Apparent, and lie down to rest in a drapery of Dreams.

Thus we often love to dream our silent way even through the noisy world. And dreamers are with dreamers spiritually, though in the body apart; nor wandering at will think they whence they come, or whither they are going, assured by delight that they will reach their journey's end—like a bee, that in many a musical gyration goes humming round men's heads and tree-tops, aimlessly curious in his joy, yet knowing instinctively the straight line that intersects all those airy circles, leading to and fro between his hive in the garden and the honey-dew on the heather hills.

What can it be that now recalls to our remembrance a few lines of Esop, the delightful old Fabulist, the Merry and Wise, who set our souls a-thinking and our hearts a-feeling in boyhood, by moral lessons read to them in almost every incident befalling in life's common walks—solemn as Simonides in this his sole surviving elegiac strain?

“What weary wo, what endless strife
Bring'st thou to mortal men, O Life!
Each hour they draw their breath.
Alas! the wretches all despair
To flee the ills they cannot bear,
But through the gates of Death.

“Yet beautiful exceedingly
Are all the works of God—
The starry heavens, the rolling sea,
The earth—thine own abode:
Blest are they all, and blest the light
Of sun by day, and moon by night.

“Yea, happy all—all blest;—but this
To man alone is given,
Whene'er he tries to catch at bliss,
To grasp the wrath of Heaven;
For his are ever-vexing fears,
And bitter thoughts—and bitter tears.

“And yet how beautiful art Thou
On Earth and Sea—and on the brow
Of starry Heaven! The Night
Sends forth the moon Thee to adorn;
And Thee to glorify the Morn
Restores the Orb of Light.

“Yet all is full of Pain and Dread;
Bedrench'd in tears for ever shed:
The darkness render'd worse
By gleams of joy—and if by Heaven
A Blessing seemeth to be given,
It changes to a Curse.”

39

Even in our paraphrase are not these lines very impressive? In the original they are much more solemn. They are not querulous, yet full of lamentation. We see in them not a weak spirit quarrelling with fate, but a strong spirit subdued by a sense of the conditions on which life has been given; conditions against which it is vain to contend, to which it is hard to submit, but which may yet be borne by a will deriving strength from necessity, and in itself noble by nature. Nor, dark as the doctrine is, can we say it is false. Intellect and Imagination may from doleful experiences have too much generalized their inductions, so as to seem to themselves to have established the Law of Misery as the Law of Life. But perhaps it is only thus that the Truth can be made available to man, as it regards the necessity of Endurance. All is not wretchedness; but the soul seeks to support itself by the belief that it is really so. Holding that creed, it has no excuse for itself, if at any time it is stung to madness by misery, or grovels in the dust in a passion of grief; none, if at any time it delivers itself wholly up, abandoning itself to joy, and acts as if it trusted to the permanence of any blessing under the law of Mutability. The Poet, in the hour of profound emotion, declares that every blessing sent from heaven is a Nemesis. That oracular response inspires awe. A salutary fear is kept alive in the foolish by such sayings of the wise. Even to us—now—they sound like a knell. Religion has instructed Philosophy; and for Fate we substitute God. But all men feel that the foundations of Faith are laid in the dark depths of their being, and that all human happiness is mysteriously allied with pain and sorrow. The most perfect bliss is ever awful, as if we enjoyed it under the shadow of some great and gracious wing that would not long be detained from heaven.

It is not for ordinary minds to attempt giving utterance to such simplicities. On their tongues truths become truisms. Sentiments, that seem always fresh, falling from the lips of moral wisdom, are stale in the mouths of men uninitiated in the greater mysteries. Genius colours common words with an impressive light, that makes them moral to all eyes—breathes into them an affecting music, that steals into all hearts like a revelation and a religion. They become memorable. They pass, as maxims, from generation to generation; and all because the divinity that is in every man's bosom responds to the truthful strain it had of yore itself inspired. Just so with the men we meet on our life-journey. One man is impressive in all his looks and words, on all serious or solemn occasions; and we carry away with us moral impressions from his eyes or lips. Another man says the same things, or nearly so, and perhaps with more fervour, and his looks are silver. But we forget his person in an hour; nor does his voice ever haunt our solitude. Simonides—Solon—Esop!—why do such lines of theirs as those assure us they were Sages? The same sentiments are the staple of many a sermon that has soothed sinners into snoring sleep.

Men take refuge even in ocular deception

2 c 2

from despair. Over buried beauty, that once glowed with the same passion that consumes themselves, they build a white marble tomb, or a green grass grave, and forget much they ought to remember—all profounder thoughts—while gazing on the epitaph of letters or of flowers. 'Tis a vision to their senses, with which Imagination would fain seek to delude Love. And 'tis well that the deception prospers; for what if Love could bid the burial-ground give up or disclose its dead? Or if Love's eyes saw through dust as through air? What if this planet—which men call Earth—were at all times seen and felt to be a cemetery circling round the sun that feeds it with death, and not a globe of green animated with life—even as the dewdrop on the rose's leaf is animated with millions of invisible creatures, wantoning in bliss born of the sunshine and the vernal prime?

Are we sermonizing overmuch in this our *L'ENVOY* to these our misnamed RECREATIONS? Even a sermon is not always useless; the few concluding sentences are sometimes luminous, like stars rising on a dull twilight; the little flower that attracted Park's eyes when he was fainting in the desert, was to him beauteous as the rose of Sharon; there is solemnity in the shadow of quiet trees on a noisy road; a churchyard may be felt even in a village fair; a face of sorrow passes by us in our gaiety, neither unfelt nor unremembered in its uncomplaining calm; and sweet from some still house in city stir is

"The voice of psalms, the simple song of praise."

We daresay you are a very modest person; but we are all given to self-glorification, private men and public, individuals and nations; and every one *Era* and *Ego* has been prouder than another of its respective achievements. To hear the Present Generation speak, such an elderly gentleman as the Past Generation begins to suspect that his personal origin lies hid in the darkness of antiquity; and worse—that he is of the *Pechs*. Now, we offer to back the Past Generation against the Present Generation, at any feat the Present Generation chooses, and give the long odds. Say Poetry. Well, we bring to the scratch a few champions—such as, Beattie, Cowper, Crabbe, Rogers, Bowles, Burns, Baillie, Campbell, Graham, Montgomery, Scott, Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hunt, Hogg, Shelley, Keates, Pollok, Cunningham, Bloomfield, Clare, and—*risum teneatis amici*—Ourselves.

"All with waistcoats of red and breeches of blue,
And mighty long tails that come swinging through."

And at sight of the cavalcade—for each poet is on his Pegasus—the champions of the Present Generation, accoutred in corduroy kilts and top-boots, and on animals which "well do we know, but dare not name," wheel to the right about with "one dismal universal bray," brandishing their wooden sabres, till, frenzied by their own trumpeters, they charge madly a palisade in their own rear, and as dismounted cavalry make good their retreat. This in their strategics is called a drawn battle.

Heroes, alive or dead, of the Past Generation, we bid you hail! Exceeding happiness to

have been born among such Births—to have lived among such Lives—to be buried among such Graves. O great glory to have seen such Stars rising one after another larger and more lustrous—at times, when dilated with delight, more like Moons than Stars—like Seraphs hovering over the earth they loved, though seeming so high up in heaven!

To whom now may the young enthusiast turn as to Beings of the same kind with himself, but of a higher order, and therefore with a love that fears no sin in its idolatry? The young enthusiast may turn to some of the living, but he will think more of others who are gone. The dead know not of his love, and he can hold no communion with the grave. But Poets never die—immortal in their works, the Library is the world of spirits; there they dwell, the same as in the flesh, when by meditation most cleansed and purified—yet with some holy change it seems—a change not in them but in us, who are stilled by the stillness, and attribute something supernatural to the Living Dead.

Since first this Golden Pen of ours—given us by one who meant it but for a memorial—began, many years ago, to let drop on paper a few careless words, what quires so distained—some pages, let us hope, with durable ink—have accumulated on our hands! Some haughty ones have chosen to say rather, how many leaves have been wasted away to wither! But not a few of the gifted—near and afar—have called on us with other voices—reminding us that long ago we were elected, on sight of our credentials—not indeed without a few black balls—into the Brotherhood. The shelf marked with our initials exhibits some half-dozen volumes only, and has room for scores. It may not be easily found in that vast Library; but, humble member as we are, we feel it now to be a point of honour to make an occasional contribution to the Club. So here is the *FIRST SERIES* of what we have chosen to call our RECREATIONS. There have been much recasting and remoulding—many alterations, believed by us to have been wrought with no unskilful spirit of change—cruel, we confess, to our feelings, rejections of numerous lucubrations to their father dear—and if we may use such words, not a few creations, in the same *genial* spirit in which we worked of old—not always unrewarded by sympathy, which is better than praise.

For kindness shown when kindness was most needed—for sympathy and affection—yea, love itself—for grief and pity not misplaced, though bestowed in a mistaken belief of our condition, forlorn indeed, but not wholly forlorn—for solace and encouragement sent to us from afar, from cities and solitudes, and from beyond seas and oceans, from brethren who never saw our face, and never may see it, we owe a debt of everlasting gratitude; and life itself must leave our heart, that beats not now as it used to beat, but with dismal trepidation, before it forget, or cease to remember as clearly as now it hears them, every one of the many words that came sweetly and solemnly to us from the Great and Good. Joy and sorrow make up the lot of our mortal estate, and by

sympathy with them, we acknowledge our brotherhood with all our kind. We do far more. The strength that is untasked, lends itself to divide the load under which another is bowed; and the calamity that lies on the heads of men is lightened, while those who at the time are not called to bear, are yet willing to involve themselves in the sorrow of a brother. So soothed by such sympathy may a poor mortal be, that the wretch almost upbraids himself for transient gleams of gladness, as if he were false to the sorrow which he sighs to think he ought to have cherished more sacredly within his miserable heart.

One word embraces all these pages of ours—Memorials. Friends are lost to us by removal—for then even the dearest are often utterly forgotten. But let something that once was theirs suddenly meet our eyes, and in a moment, returning from the region of the rising or the setting sun, the friend of our youth seems at our side, unchanged his voice and his smile; or dearer to our eyes than ever, because of some affecting change wrought on face and figure by climate and by years. Let it be but his name written with his own hand on the title-page of a book; or a few syllables on the margin of a favourite passage which long ago we have read together, “when life itself was new,” and poetry overflowed the whole world; or a lock of her hair in whose eyes we first knew the meaning of the word “depth.” And if death had stretched out the absence into the dim arms of eternity—and removed the distance away into that bourne from which no traveller returns—the absence and the distance of her on whose forehead once hung the relic we adore—what heart may abide the beauty of the ghost that doth sometimes at midnight appear at our sleepless bed, and with pale uplifted arms waft over us at once a blessing and a farewell!

Why so sad a word—*Farewell*? We should not weep in wishing welfare, nor sully felicity with tears. But we do weep because evil lies lurking in wait over all the earth for the innocent and the good, the happy and the beautiful; and, when guarded no more by our eyes, it seems as if the demon would leap out upon his prey. Or is it because we are so selfish that we cannot bear the thought of losing the sight of the happiness of a beloved object, and are troubled with a strange jealousy of beings unknown to us, and for ever to be unknown, about to be taken into the very heart, perhaps, of the friend from whom we are parting, and to whom in that fear we give almost a sullen farewell? Or does the shadow of

death pass over us while we stand for the last time together on the sea-shore, and see the ship with all her sails about to voyage away to the uttermost parts of the earth? Or do we shudder at the thought of mutability in all created things—and know that ere a few suns shall have brightened the path of the swift vessel on the sea, we shall be dimly remembered—at last forgotten—and all those days, months, and years that once seemed eternal, swallowed up in everlasting oblivion!

With us all ambitious desires some years ago expired. Far rather would we read than write now-a-days—far rather than read, sit with shut eyes and no book in the room—far rather than so sit, walk about alone any where

“Beneath the umbrage deep
That shades the silent world of memory.”

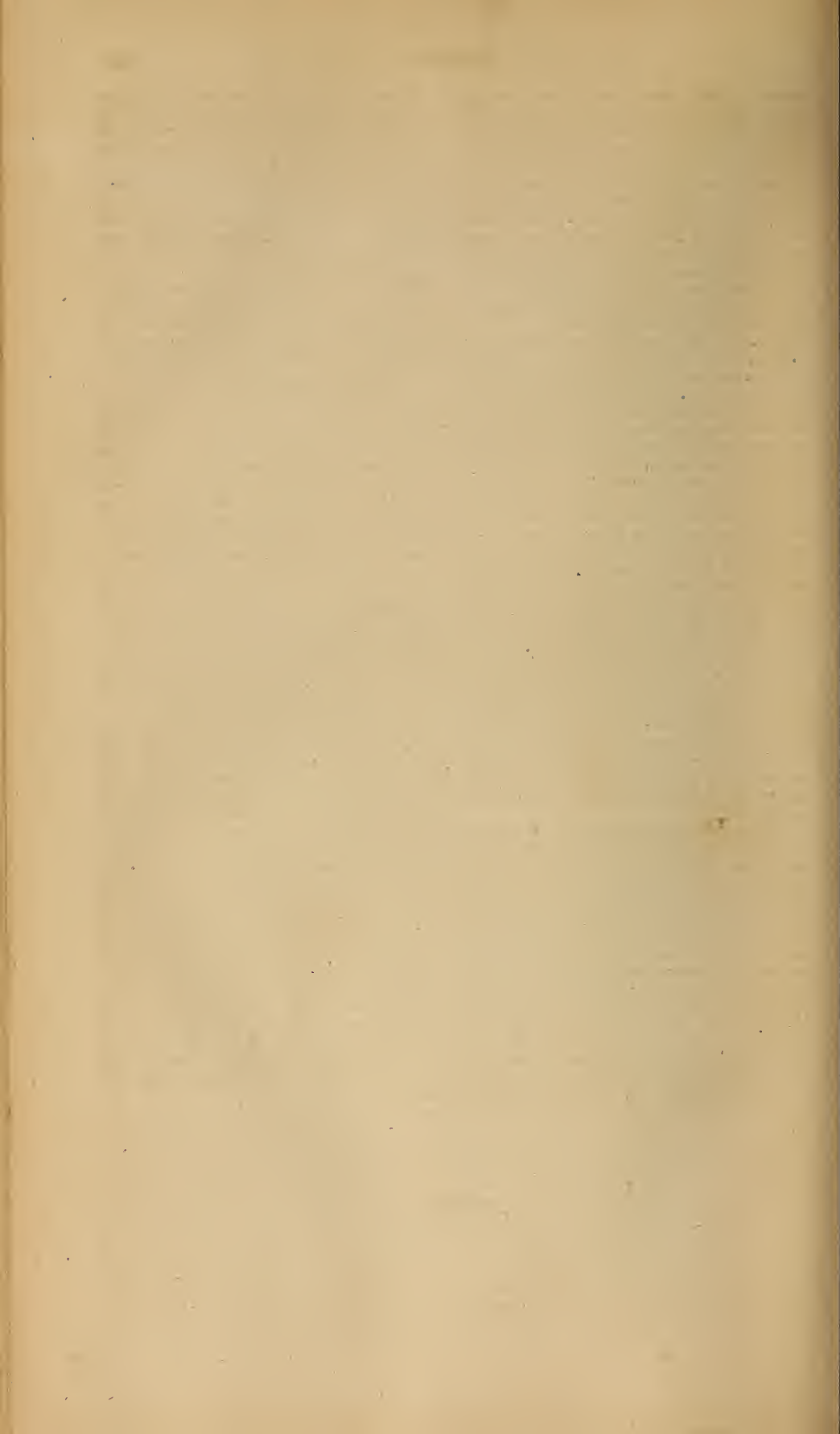
Shall we live! or “like beasts and common people die!” There is something harsh and grating in the collocation of these words of the “Melancholy Cowley;” yet he meant no harm, for he was a kind, good creature as ever was born, and a true genius. He there has expressed concisely, but too abruptly, the mere fact of their falling alike and together into oblivion. Far better Gray’s exquisite words,

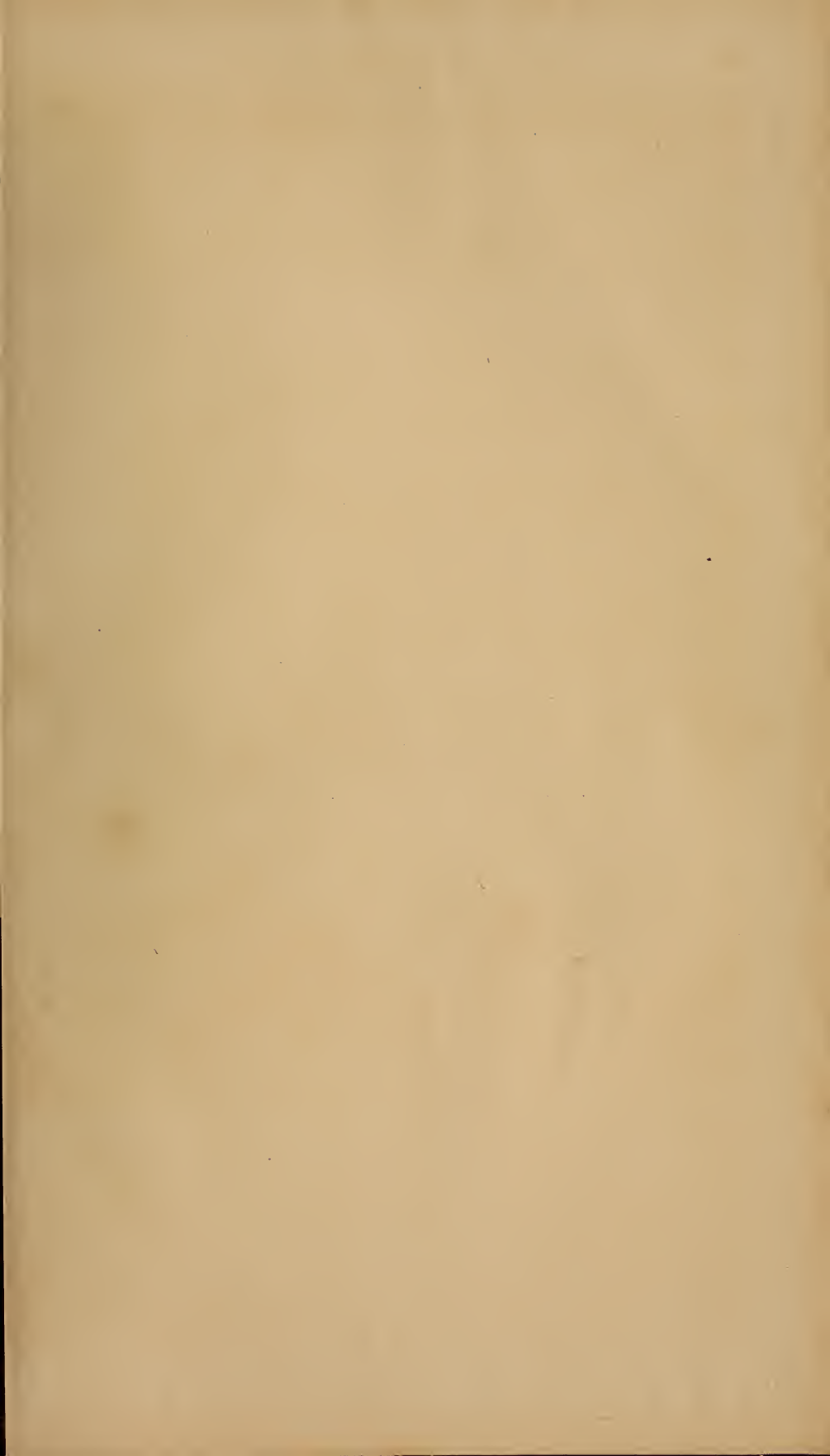
“On some fond breast the parting soul relies!”

The reliance is firm and sure; the “fond breast” is faithful to its trust, and dying, transmits it to another; till after two or three transmissions—holy all, but fainter and dimmer—the pious tradition dies, and all memorial of the love and the delight, the pity and the sorrow, is swallowed up in vacant night.

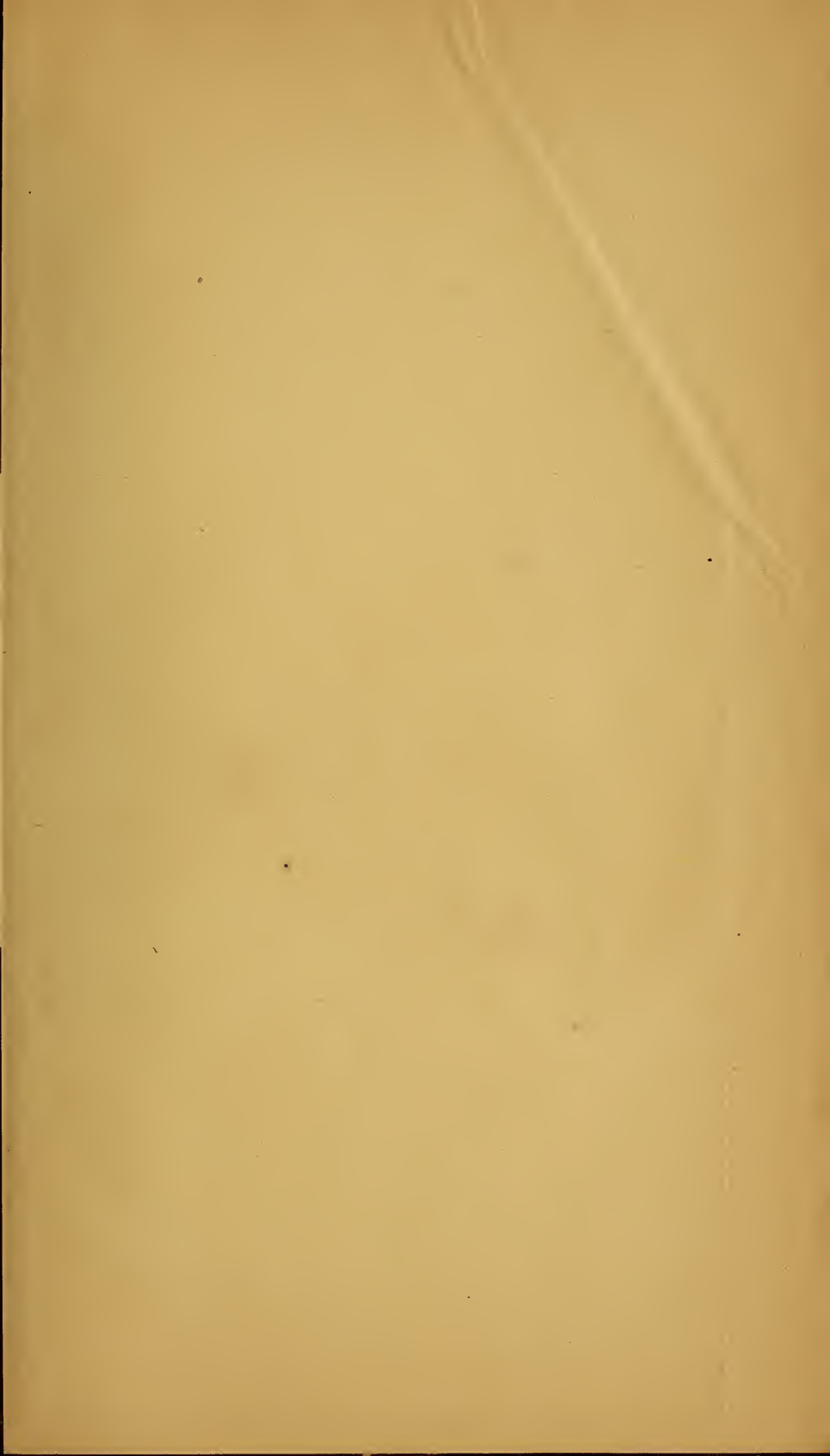
Posthumous Fame! Proud words—yet may they be uttered in an humble spirit. The common lot of man is, after death—oblivion. Yet genius, however small its sphere, if conversant with the conditions of the human heart, may vivify with indestructible life some happy delineations, that shall continue to be held dear by successive sorrowers in this vale of tears. If the name of the delineator continue to have something sacred in its sound—obscure to the many as it may be, or non-existent—the hope of such posthumous fame is sufficient to one who overrates not his own endowments. And as the hope has its root in love and sympathy, he who by his writings has inspired towards himself, when in life, some of these feelings in the hearts of not a few who never saw his face, seems to be justified in believing that even after final obliteration of *Hic jacet* from his tombstone, his memory will be regarded with something of the same affection in his REMAINS.

THE END.











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